

Council of the District of Columbia
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY & PUBLIC SAFETY
COMMITTEE REPORT
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20004

To: Members of the Council of the District of Columbia

From: Councilmember Charles Allen *CA*
Chairperson, Committee on the Judiciary & Public Safety

Date: November 1, 2018

Subject: Report on Bill 22-0778, the "Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018"

The Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety, to which Bill 22-0778, the "Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018", was referred, reports favorably thereon, and recommends approval by the Council of the District of Columbia.

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND EFFECT

I. Purpose and Effect

Bill 22-0778, the “Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018”, was introduced by Committee Chairperson Charles Allen and Councilmembers Anita Bonds, Vincent Gray, David Grosso, Brianne Nadeau, Robert White, and Trayon White on April 10, 2018. The bill was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety the same day. The Committee held a public hearing on the bill on June 27, where approximately seventy witnesses testified in support, and no public witnesses testified in opposition.

The purpose of B22-0778 is to amend the District of Columbia Election Code of 1955 to allow sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds to vote in all District elections, including the presidential election. The bill also allows sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds to serve as qualified petition circulators and polling place workers. In addition, it requires educational institutions, including schools in the District of Columbia Public Schools system, public charter schools, independent schools, private schools, parochial schools, and private instructors, to provide students sixteen years of age and older with voter registration applications or information, in writing, describing how to obtain an application online. Lastly, the bill amends voter registration notifications to reflect the new voting age and requires the Mayor to furnish certain information about deceased voters.

II. Committee Reasoning

a. Background

Turning sixteen has special significance in American society and in District law. At sixteen, a young adult takes on new “adult” responsibilities: for example, in the District, he or she can drive a car, be employed and pay taxes, consent to certain medical procedures, receive service of process in legal matters, and file a civil protection order. Many sixteen-year-olds shoulder adult responsibilities and burdens, serving as caregivers, working to support their families, and sometimes caring for children of their own. They experience trauma, victimization, and violence in and outside of school. And yet they have no ability to influence the election of those who represent them and make policy decisions of critical importance to their lives.

The District’s population of sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds is incredibly diverse. In 2016, of the more than 10,400 young people ages sixteen and seventeen,¹ 70% reported their race or ethnicity as black, 21% white, and 6% other.² Twelve percent of respondents identified their ethnicity as Hispanic/Latinx.³ Many policy issues that come before the Council, such as gun violence, school discipline, community policing, workforce and labor issues, and affordable

¹ See, *Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Single Year of Age and Sex for the United States, States, and Puerto Rico Commonwealth: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2017*, United States Census Bureau, https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=PEP_2017_PEPSYASEX&prodT ype=table.

² Information provided to the Committee by the D.C. Office of Planning.

³ *Id.*

housing disproportionately impact the District's young people of color. For this reason, the Committee has applied a racial equity lens in recommending the bill for Council approval.

Furthermore, the Committee believes lowering the voting age to sixteen will increase voter turnout and enhance the District's democracy. Overall voter turnout in the District is low. In the recent primary election held on June 19, 2018, voter turnout was, in fact, abysmal. The Board of Elections ("BOE") reported that approximately 18%, or 84,517, of the 479,723 registered voters in the District cast a ballot in the election.⁴ By engaging young people in the electoral process at a younger age, the Committee hopes to increase turnout not only among young voters but also among adult family members of these voters.

Lowering the voting age to sixteen – particularly in the District of Columbia – is also a civil rights issue. After listening to the incredibly powerful testimony from dozens of student activists at its public hearing on the bill, the Committee is convinced that – for many reasons – the Council must not perpetuate taxation without representation for this population. Bill 22-0778 will enfranchise the District's young people – those whose communities and futures are most directly impacted by policy decisions – and bring their voices into the political process. In doing so, the Council will create engaged, lifelong voters and strengthen democracy by including a greater diversity of voices in the political process.

b. Current Law

District law provides that a person who is "at least seventeen years of age and who will be eighteen years of age on or before the next general election" (and meets several other qualifications, such as citizenship) can vote.⁵ This means that a seventeen-year-old can vote in a primary election if they will turn eighteen before the next general election. As of the date of this report, there were 690 seventeen-year-old registered voters who will be qualified to vote in the November 2018 General Election.⁶

The United States Constitution guarantees the right to vote for anyone over the age of eighteen. The Twenty-Sixth Amendment states: "The right of citizens of the United States, who are eighteen years of age or older, to vote, shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any state on account of age."⁷ However, the Constitution is silent on limits to the voting age for those under the age of eighteen. Thus, it is constitutional for jurisdictions to exceed the Constitution's floor by lowering the voting age to an age under eighteen.

c. Other Jurisdictions

The District would not be the first jurisdiction in the United States to lower its voting age. In 2013, Takoma Park, Maryland, became the first to lower its voting age to sixteen, allowing sixteen-year-olds to vote in local elections and for referenda. Shortly thereafter, Hyattsville and

⁴ BOE, *Primary Election 2018 – Certified Results*, https://electionresults.dcboe.org/election_statistics/2018-Primary-Election (last accessed August 23, 2018).

⁵ D.C. Official Code § 1-1001.02.

⁶ Information provided to the Committee by BOE.

⁷ U.S. Const. amend. XXVI.

Greenbelt, Maryland, followed suit and lowered the voting age to sixteen for local elections. In Berkeley, California, sixteen-year-olds can vote in school board elections. Though other jurisdictions have lowered the voting age for some or all local elections, because of the District's state-like ability to control the qualifications for voting in *all* elections, the District would be the first jurisdiction to allow sixteen-year-olds to vote not only in local elections but also in the presidential election.⁸

Outside of the United States, numerous countries allow sixteen-year-olds to vote. In 2007, Austria became the first member of the European Union to adopt a voting age of sixteen in nationwide elections. In November 2013, Malta lowered the voting age from eighteen to sixteen for local elections. In 2018, the Maltese Parliament unanimously voted in favor of amending the country's constitution, lowering the official voting age from eighteen to sixteen for general elections, European Parliament elections, and referenda. In 2015, the Scottish Parliament reduced the voting age to sixteen. Brazil, Argentina, Cuba, Ecuador, Nicaragua, and the Isle of Man also have lowered the voting age to sixteen. In Germany, four out of the sixteen German states allow sixteen-year-olds to vote in state elections, and ten states allow sixteen-year-olds to vote in municipal elections.

d. *Responses to Arguments Against Lowering the Voting Age*

Since 2015, when Chairperson Allen first introduced a version of this legislation,⁹ opponents have made several arguments against lowering the vote age to sixteen. At the Committee's hearing on B22-0778, the Committee heard from approximately seventy witnesses, the majority of whom were students, unanimously in favor of the bill. Many of the witnesses directly addressed and countered some of the most common arguments against allowing sixteen-year-olds to vote. These arguments and responses are discussed below.

i. *Argument: Teenagers are not sufficiently politically engaged or educated about policy matters.*

Prior to the Committee's hearing, Chairperson Allen met with several student groups from across the District to discuss B22-0778. In these meetings, students showed significant engagement and investment in policy decisions affecting the District. The students spoke eloquently about a wide range of issues, including education, gun violence, affordable housing, healthcare, gentrification, and employment opportunities – all issues that greatly impact their own futures. The students demonstrated both an awareness of problems their communities face and a passion for problem solving.

The hearing further demonstrated that many students are just as engaged as adults, if not more so. Student after student witness testified with poise and passion, offered creative solutions,

⁸ Presidential elections are state-run elections. Because the District simultaneously functions as a city, county, and state, the District runs the presidential election as well as its local elections. Thus, this bill would, by allowing sixteen-year-olds to vote in District elections, allow sixteen-year-olds to vote in the presidential election.

⁹ On November 3, 2015, Councilmember Allen, along with Councilmembers David Grosso and Brianne Nadeau, introduced B21-0468, the "Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2015", which would have lowered the voting age to sixteen years of age; <http://lms.dccouncil.us/Legislation/B21-0468?FromSearchResults=true>. The bill lapsed without action.

and demanded a voice on issues that affect their futures. Tiffany Missembe, a Ward 4 resident and student at Wilson High School, spoke about educational inequities and attendance policies in the District.¹⁰ QueSton Bell, a Ward 5 resident and student at Cesar Chavez Public Charter School, spoke about how gentrification is affecting communities of color.¹¹ Many other students spoke eloquently about violence in their community, lack of educational and employment opportunities, climate change, and other complex issues they feel pose threats to their futures.

Adult witnesses representing youth organizations also testified in favor of the bill, noting how engaged and involved the youth with whom they work are in District politics. For example, Robyn Lingo, Executive Director of Mikva Challenge, testified that youth have shown her they care deeply about the issues facing their communities and they are uniquely qualified to identify solutions to these problems.¹² The Campaign Manager for the Vote16DC coalition, Dave Chandrasekaran, testified to how the youth leaders of the campaign had impressed him with their activism and taught him how to be a more engaged citizen.¹³ Former Congressperson David Bonior testified that, in his fourteen years of work engaging youth in elections, he has seen how ready to participate youth are, how enthusiastic they are, and what good examples they set for family and friends.¹⁴

Furthermore, former Takoma Park Councilmember Tim Male testified that in Takoma Park, the municipality has seen an increase in engagement from young people since lowering the voting age.¹⁵ He stated that sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds have started to come to candidate debates. They testify at public meetings. They reach out to elected officials to ask for assistance or services. They have organized Rock the Vote events. They have even hosted and moderated candidate debates.

Research has shown the relationship between young adults' enfranchisement and their political activity. A study published in the peer-reviewed *Journal of Youth Studies* showed that with enfranchisement comes increased interest in politics: "Young people are said to be uninterested in politics. This lack of political interest among adolescents has been used as an argument against lowering the voting age. But why should someone be interested in politics if he or she is not eligible to vote? [...] We observe that political interest of sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds was higher after lowering the voting age [...] In the specific societal and situational

¹⁰ Council of the District of Columbia Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety, *Public Hearing on B22-0778, the "Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018"* (oral testimony of Tiffany Missembe, Student) (June 27, 2018), <http://lims.dccouncil.us/Download/40028/B22-0778-HearingRecord1.pdf>.

¹¹ *Id.* (oral testimony of QueSton Bell, Student), <http://lims.dccouncil.us/Download/40028/B22-0778-HearingRecord1.pdf>.

¹² *Id.* (oral testimony of Robyn Lingo, Executive Director of Mikva Challenge), <http://lims.dccouncil.us/Download/40028/B22-0778-HearingRecord1.pdf>.

¹³ *Id.* (oral testimony of Dave Chandrasekaran, Campaign Manager, Vote16DC), <http://lims.dccouncil.us/Download/40028/B22-0778-HearingRecord1.pdf>.

¹⁴ *Id.* (oral testimony of David Bonior, Former Congressperson), <http://lims.dccouncil.us/Download/40028/B22-0778-HearingRecord1.pdf>.

¹⁵ *Id.* (oral testimony of Tim Male, former Councilmember, Takoma Park, Maryland), <http://lims.dccouncil.us/Download/40028/B22-0778-HearingRecord1.pdf>.

context of Austria [the country studied], the development of political interest among young people seems to be associated with the ‘life event’ of enfranchisement.”¹⁶

ii. *Argument: Teenagers’ brains are not sufficiently developed to make informed, intelligent decisions.*

At the Committee’s hearing, Daniel Hart, a Psychology Professor at Rutgers University, testified that the sixteen-year-old brain is more than capable and mature enough to vote.¹⁷ He noted that while sixteen-year-olds have more immature brains than adults, these immaturities affect quickly-made judgments, particularly in the presence of peers.¹⁸ This is called “hot” cognition.¹⁹ Choices motivated by hot cognition are entirely emotional in nature with little reasoning involved. Voting is not this kind of judgment – instead, voting involves “cold” cognition, which is independent of emotional involvement.²⁰ When voting, people have time to consider their decision, and they do it by themselves rather than in the presence of peers. Voters are able to make decisions based on facts and evidence, rather than on emotion.²¹ Philip Zelazo, a professor at the University of Minnesota’s Institute of Child Development, conducted a study of executive function,²² suggesting that by age sixteen, cold cognition skills are nearly fully developed.²³ Professor Zelazo notes that the ability to make informed decisions is formed well before the age of eighteen, with the biggest leap occurring from ages ten to twelve.²⁴ Further research by Professor Hart has shown that sixteen-year-olds possess the same level of civic knowledge as those ages eighteen to twenty-five, and there is no statistical discrepancy between sixteen-year-old and eighteen-year-old voters.²⁵

In addition, sixteen-year-olds are sufficiently intelligent to meet America’s standards for voting. In 1965, Congress enacted the Voting Rights Act,²⁶ which replaced literacy tests throughout the country with a presumption that a citizen is sophisticated enough to cast a meaningful vote if he or she has passed sixth grade. The Supreme Court upheld this provision in *Katzenbach v. Morgan*,²⁷ holding that Congress could enforce Fourteenth Amendment rights – such as the right to vote – by prohibiting conduct it deemed to interfere with such rights, even if that conduct may not be independently unconstitutional. If an adult who passed sixth grade has

¹⁶ Eva Zeglovitz and Martina Zandonella, *Political interest of adolescents before and after lowering the voting age: the case of Austria*, JOURN. OF YOUTH STUD. (Oct. 25, 2011),

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13676261.2013.793785#.VPToHS74TKV>.

¹⁷ *Supra* note 10 (oral testimony of Daniel Hart, Professor, Rutgers University), <http://lms.dccouncil.us/Download/40028/B22-0778-HearingRecord1.pdf>.

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ Zachary Crockett, *The case for allowing 16-year-olds to vote*, VOX (Nov. 7, 2016), <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2016/11/7/13347080/voting-age-election-16>.

²⁰ *Id.*

²¹ *Id.*

²² *Id.*

²³ *Id.*

²⁴ *Id.*

²⁵ *Supra* note 10 (oral testimony of Daniel Hart, Professor, Rutgers University), <http://lms.dccouncil.us/Download/40028/B22-0778-HearingRecord1.pdf>.

²⁶ Voting Rights Act of 1965, Pub. L. 89-110, 79 Stat. 437.

²⁷ *Katzenbach v. Morgan*, 384 U.S. 641 (1966).

enough intelligence to vote, it stands to reason that a sixteen-year-old who is in tenth to twelfth grade does as well.

It is also important to note that lowering the voting age does not require changing the definition of adulthood. As several student witnesses testified, in our society, we have different age requirements for different legal responsibilities and privileges: for example, we allow young people to drive at age sixteen, buy cigarettes between ages eighteen and twenty-one, consume alcohol at age twenty-one, and rent cars between ages eighteen and twenty-five. Lowering the voting age from eighteen to sixteen does not change other age restrictions, but rather reexamines our idea that eighteen is the appropriate age at which a person should be able to vote. As an opinion piece in the *New York Times* advocating for lowering the federal voting age stated: “Although the specific ages used to these [other] purposes often lack a good rationale, there is no reason lowering the voting age would require lowering, say, the drinking age, any more than allowing people to drive at 16 should permit them to drink or smoke at that age as well.”²⁸

iii. *Argument: Voter turnout among young people is already low. Teenagers will not turn out to vote.*

Youth voter turnout is at an all-time low in the United States. In the 2014 national midterm election, 19.9% of eighteen- to twenty-nine-year-olds voted, which was the lowest turnout rate ever recorded.²⁹ Only 46.7% of this age group even registered to vote.³⁰ The low turnout rate is similar in local elections. Some suggested solutions have included making voter registration easier and offering preregistration programs. Lowering the voting age has been gaining support as another way to boost turnout for both young people and older voters.³¹

Research shows that when offered the opportunity, teenagers turn out in larger numbers to the polls than their adult counterparts. At the hearing, Tim Male, former Councilmember on the Takoma Park City Council, testified that the turnout rate of sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds in Takoma Park has been greater than that of older voters in each election since the voting age was lowered.³² In the 2013 election, a total of fifty-nine Takoma Park residents who were sixteen or seventeen voted. Those residents comprise 16.9% of eligible voters in that age group, which is nearly double the 8.5% turnout rate of eligible voters eighteen and older. That number also represented 42.1% of registered voters in that age group, which is more than four times the turnout rate (10.2%) among registered voters eighteen and older.³³ Similarly, in Austria, more sixteen- and

²⁸ Laurence Steinberg, *Why We Should Lower the Voting Age to 16*, N.Y. TIMES (March 2, 2018), <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/02/opinion/sunday/voting-age-school-shootings.html>.

²⁹ Julia Glum, *Youth Voter Turnout For 2014 Midterm Election Lowest In 40 Years: Report*, INTL. BUS. TIMES (July 22, 2015), <https://www.ibtimes.com/youth-voter-turnout-2014-midterm-election-lowest-40-years-report-2019813>.

³⁰ *Supra* note 19.

³¹ Angus Johnston, *Why We Should Lower the Voting Age in America*, ROLLING STONE (Nov. 3, 2016), <https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-features/why-we-should-lower-the-voting-age-in-america-190319/>.

³² *Supra* note 10 (oral testimony of Tim Male, former Councilmember, Takoma Park, Maryland), <http://lms.dccouncil.us/Download/40028/B22-0778-HearingRecord1.pdf>.

³³ *Solid Turnout of Teen Voters in Local Election*, The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (Nov. 12, 2013), <https://civicyouth.org/solid-turnout-of-teen-voters-in-local-election/>.

seventeen-year-olds voted than eighteen- to twenty-one-year-olds in the election following the lowering of the voting age.³⁴

Bill Bystricky, President of Growing Democracy, testified at the Committee's hearing that not only do people younger than eighteen vote at higher rates, but they also often encourage non-voting adult members of their families to vote, as well, thereby increasing turnout among all ages.³⁵ He stated that he believes the movement to lower the voting age is "rejuvenating democracy" in this way. Similarly, Melissa Wyatt, Policy Associate at Rock the Vote, testified that her research has shown that a "trickle-up effect" occurs from politically-engaged young people to adult household members.³⁶ In other words, voting by young people can stimulate voting by adults around them, increasing voter turnout overall.³⁷ Numerous studies and articles have been written about this effect of "trickle-up" political socialization.³⁸ One study, published in August 2018, studied data from Danish municipalities in four elections and consistently found that parents are more likely to vote when their child enters the electorate.³⁹ The study found that, on average across the four elections, parents become 2.8 percentage points more likely to vote – and this effect was driven by parents whose children still live with them (while there is no discernable effect for parents whose child does not live with them).⁴⁰ This data supports the importance of enfranchising sixteen- and seventeen-year olds while they still live at home – both to increase their own turnout rate and the turnout rate of adult family members.

Numerous witnesses also testified that voting is a habit that is more likely to form at age sixteen rather than at age eighteen.⁴¹ Abby Kiesa, a representative from the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement ("CIRCLE"), testified that research has shown that the earlier someone begins the "habitual act" of voting, the more likely it is that he or she will become a lifelong voter.⁴² Several other witnesses noted that eighteen-year-olds are often going through major life changes – they are entering the workforce, moving somewhere out-of-state for

³⁴ *Supra* note 19.

³⁵ *Supra* note 10 (oral testimony of Bill Bystricky, President, Growing Democracy), <http://lims.dccouncil.us/Download/40028/B22-0778-HearingRecord1.pdf>.

³⁶ *Id.* (oral testimony of Melissa Wyatt, Policy Associate, Rock the Vote), <http://lims.dccouncil.us/Download/40028/B22-0778-HearingRecord1.pdf>.

³⁷ *Id.*

³⁸ See, e.g., Stephanie Aragon, *Youth Voting: State and city approaches to early civic engagement*, Education Commission of the States (Dec. 2015), <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED562537.pdf>; Michael McDevitt and Spiro Kioussis, *Experiments in Political Socialization: Kids Voting USA as a Model for Civil Education Reform*, The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (Aug. 2006), <https://civicyouth.org/PopUps/WorkingPapers/WP49McDevitt.pdf>.

³⁹ Jens Olav Dahlgaard, *Trickle-Up Political Socialization: The Causal Effect on Turnout of Parenting a Newly Enfranchised Voter*, AMERICAN POLITICAL SCIENCE REVIEW, Vol. 112, Iss. 3, at 698-705 (August 2018), <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/american-political-science-review/article/trickleup-political-socialization-the-causal-effect-on-turnout-of-parenting-a-newly-enfranchised-voter/96F5DE28E0E9EBD33C38119240383246>.

⁴⁰ *Id.*

⁴¹ See, e.g., *supra* note 10 (oral testimony of Chloe Ifill, Student; Brandon Klugman, Vote16DC Campaign Coordinator, Generation Citizen, and Patrick Paschall, former Councilmember, Hyattsville, Maryland), <http://lims.dccouncil.us/Download/40028/B22-0778-HearingRecord1.pdf>.

⁴² *Supra* note 10 (oral testimony of Abby Kiesa, Representative, Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement), <http://lims.dccouncil.us/Download/40028/B22-0778-HearingRecord1.pdf>.

college, or otherwise transitioning into adulthood.⁴³ These changes are not conducive to high voter turnout among this population. Brandon Klugman, from Generation Citizen, testified that at age sixteen, a person is in a much better position to vote for the first time than at age eighteen.⁴⁴ He noted that data from cities in the U.S. and other countries support this conclusion.⁴⁵ Ceon Palmore, a student, testified that young people living at home are in a better position to vote because they are in a more stable environment, supported by family, peers, and teachers.⁴⁶ In addition, other factors may be in play: for example, an eighteen-year-old at college away from home may not identify strongly enough with their new community to vote. They may also not know how to absentee vote in their home city or state. Voting may simply just not be a priority, especially for those young people who are not already familiar with the voting process. In one report, eighteen-year-olds cited being “too busy” as the predominant rationale for not turning out to vote.⁴⁷

In contrast, sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds often still live at home, in a place with which they may strongly identify. As the Committee witnessed at its hearing, this population is highly informed about their communities and the issues they face. They are still in school, where they are learning about government and civics, and these courses can be given greater emphasis once sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds can vote. Overall, it is simply easier to begin the habit of voting at age sixteen when life is not in such a state of flux. At this age, a young person is in a better place to form a long-lasting voting habit, which they can bring with them into the next stage of life. Studies have shown that young adults living at home are more likely to vote than those who have moved out on their own.⁴⁸

iv. *Argument: Teenagers will vote like their parents vote.*

Contrary to the concern that teenaged voters will parrot their parents’ votes, research shows sixteen-year-old voters think carefully and make independent judgments. A recent study by Dr. Jan Eichhorn of sixteen- and seventeen-year-old Scottish voters showed that, on the vote to decide independence, only 56% of voters in this age group voted the same way as their parents.⁴⁹ Just like voters of all ages, sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds considered the views of their parents, their friends, and others they respected, and then reached their own decisions by Election Day. Similarly, a 2012 study of Austrian voters aged sixteen and seventeen found that “the quality of these citizens’ choices is similar to that of older voters, so they do cast votes in ways that enable

⁴³ *Supra* note 10 (oral testimony of Chloe Ifill, Student), <http://lms.dccouncil.us/Download/40028/B22-0778-HearingRecord1.pdf>.

⁴⁴ *Supra* note 10 (oral testimony of Brandon Klugman, Vote16DC Campaign Coordinator, Generation Citizen), <http://lms.dccouncil.us/Download/40028/B22-0778-HearingRecord1.pdf>.

⁴⁵ *Id.*

⁴⁶ *Supra* note 10 (oral testimony of Ceon Palmore, Student), <http://lms.dccouncil.us/Download/40028/B22-0778-HearingRecord1.pdf>.

⁴⁷ *Supra* note 19.

⁴⁸ Yosef Bhatti and Kasper M. Hansen, *Leaving the Nest and the Social Act of Voting: Turnout among First-Time Voters*, JOURNAL OF ELECTIONS, PUBLIC OPINION AND PARTIES, Vol. 22, Iss. 4, at 380-406 (September 2012), <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17457289.2012.721375?journalCode=fbep20&>.

⁴⁹ Jan Eichhorn, *Will 16 and 17 year olds make a difference in the referendum?*, ScotCen Social Research (Nov. 2013), http://www.scotcen.org.uk/media/205540/131129_will-16-and-17-years-olds-make-a-difference.pdf.

their interests to be represented equally well. These results are encouraging for supporters of a lower voting age.”⁵⁰

Furthermore, in his testimony, former Hyattsville City Council member, Patrick Paschall, stated that many of the arguments against lowering the voting age, including the one that teenagers will just vote like their parents, have a common thread: the idea that “I don’t think they will vote the way I want them to vote”.⁵¹ He noted that this argument assumes that disagreeing with the way a person may vote is reason to not allow them to vote. Many adults vote one way simply because someone they know – perhaps a parent or child – is voting that way. Moreover, many adults do not make informed decisions when voting. Though we may not always approve of how all adults vote, it would be impermissible to restrict their right to vote based on the content of their vote.

v. *Argument: Teenagers do not have “skin in the game”.*

In the District, we allow sixteen-year-olds to hold jobs. They must pay taxes to the District government on income from those jobs. Revenue from their taxes funds elected officials’ activities and laws enacted by those officials. We also allow sixteen-year-olds to drive cars in the District – cars with the phrase “End Taxation Without Representation” written on their license plates. The Committee heard clearly from students at its hearing that they are invested in their communities and their futures. The District is where they live, care for family members, work, go to school, navigate violence, and are transitioning to adulthood. Many witnesses clearly articulated direct and concrete “skin in the game” in District politics. Numerous witnesses made the connection between enfranchising sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds and District statehood. They understand that their futures depend on decisions made by elected officials, and they also understand that they must have a voice in these decisions through voting. To say that these teenagers do not have skin in the game would be to dismiss these powerful youth voices.

e. *Committee Print*

The Committee Print amends the District of Columbia Election Code of 1955 to allow sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds to vote in all District elections. It also allows sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds to serve as qualified petition circulators and polling place workers. In addition, the Committee Print requires educational institutions to provide, on an annual basis, its students sixteen years of age and older with a voter registration application or information, in writing, describing how to obtain a voter registration application online. Lastly, the Committee Print amends voter registration notifications to reflect the new voting age and requires the Mayor to furnish certain information about deceased voters.

⁵⁰ Markus Wagner, David Johann, and Sylvia Kritzing, *Voting at 16: Turnout and the Quality of Vote Choice*, ELECTORAL STUDIES, Vol. 31, Iss. 2 (June 2012), <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0261379412000212>.

⁵¹ *Supra* note 10 (oral testimony of Patrick Paschall, former Councilmember, Hyattsville, Maryland), <http://lms.dccouncil.us/Download/40028/B22-0778-HearingRecord1.pdf>.

III. Conclusion

The young people who stepped onto the national stage to call for gun control in the wake of the school shooting in Parkland, Florida, have challenged the unfortunate stereotype of American teenagers as indifferent to politics and disengaged in their communities.⁵² Instead, they have demonstrated to the country that they are thoughtful, opinionated, and passionate about the social and political issues with which our country is struggling.⁵³ They recognize that many – if not all – of these issues, such as climate change, education, gun control, and health care, affect their generation the most directly.⁵⁴ Yet, when it comes to choosing the lawmakers who make decisions about these critical issues, the same young people are unable to participate. They have no power to influence their leaders because they have no right to vote. This is what the Committee Print changes – the power dynamic skewed against young people created by disenfranchisement. The Committee hopes that this measure will be part of a broader national trend across cities, states, and federally to lower the voting age to sixteen. In fact, this movement is already growing – New York Democratic Rep. Grace Meng recently introduced in Congress an amendment to the United States Constitution to lower the national voting age to sixteen.⁵⁵

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

April 10, 2018	B22-0778 is introduced by Councilmembers Allen, Bonds, Gray, Grosso, Nadeau, R. White, and T. White.
April 10, 2018	B22-0778 is referred to the Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety.
April 20, 2018	Notice of Intent to Act on B22-0778 is published in the <i>District of Columbia Register</i> .
May 11, 2018	Notice of Public Hearing on B22-0778 is published in the <i>District of Columbia Register</i> .
May 25, 2018	Revised Notice of Public Hearing on B22-0778 is published in the <i>District of Columbia Register</i> .
June 27, 2018	Public Hearing on B22-0778 is held by the Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety.

⁵² Laurence Steinberg, *Why We Should Lower the Voting Age to 16*, N.Y. TIMES (March 2, 2018), <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/02/opinion/sunday/voting-age-school-shootings.html>.

⁵³ *Id.*

⁵⁴ Rainesford Stauffer, *These teens marched for gun laws. They were just getting warmed up.*, THINK PROGRESS (May 29, 2018), <https://thinkprogress.org/student-activists-lower-voting-age-08f881fdb25/>.

⁵⁵ Jeff Cirillo, *Rep. Meng: Amend Constitution to Lower Voting Age to 16*, ROLL CALL (August 15, 2018), <https://www.rollcall.com/news/politics/meng-amend-constitution-lower-voting-age-16>. In her reason for introducing the measure, Rep. Meng cited the recent “inspirational and passionate” activism by students, particularly on gun violence, healthcare, and climate change. *Id.* Campaigns to lower the voting age, led by Vote16USA, are also under way in Boulder, Memphis, and Illinois. *Supra* note 48.

November 1, 2018 Consideration and vote on B22-0778 by the Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety.

POSITION OF THE EXECUTIVE

The Executive did not testify at the hearing; however, the Mayor subsequently voiced her support for the legislation.⁵⁶ The Board of Elections testified in support, as summarized below.

ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION COMMENTS

James Harnett – Commissioner, ANC 2A08

Commissioner Harnett testified in support of the bill. He also submitted a resolution in support of the bill on behalf of ANC 2A. At twenty years old, Commissioner Harnett is a George Washington University student and the youngest elected official in the District. He ran for office because he is interested in representing student voices, and his entire single-member district consists of students. He spoke to how his constituents have “skin in the game” – he noted, for example, the recent nomination of a Supreme Court justice and how this will affect generations to come. He also pointed to issues like climate change, which will significantly impact young people’s futures. He testified that it is important to allow youth to engage with the government because only then is the government going to truly represent the ideals youth hold. sHe ended by stating that passing the bill will begin a national conversation about giving youth a voice in the political process.

WITNESS LIST AND HEARING RECORD

The Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety held a hearing on B22-0778, the “Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018”, on June 27, 2018. A video recording of the hearing can be viewed at <https://entertainment.dc.gov/page/demand-2018-0>. The following witnesses testified before the Committee:

Public Witnesses

Alik Shier – Student / Volunteer, Young Women’s Project & Vote16DC

Mr. Shier, at Ward 1 resident and Woodrow Wilson High School student, testified in support of the bill. He stated that he works as a host at Purple Patch, as a server at the Mt. Pleasant farmers market, and as a peer educator at the Young Women’ Project. He testified that politicians make a host of decisions that impact residents of the city, including students. He cited education as an important issue, and he believes students are well-equipped to vote on this issue because they know what works in the classroom. If the bill passed, 11,000 students would be able to participate in education-related policy decisions. He also testified that lowering the voting age would increase

⁵⁶ See Fenit Nirappil, *Youthful March for Our Lives revives push to lower voting age to 16 in D.C.*, WASH. POST (April 10, 2018), https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/dc-politics/youth-driven-march-for-our-lives-revives-push-to-lower-voting-age-to-16-in-dc/2018/04/09/3f6affe4-3c0f-11e8-974f-aacd97698cef_story.html?utm_term=.a4adfc56371e.

civic engagement and create lifelong voters. He cited Takoma Park and Scotland as examples of jurisdictions where the voting age had been lowered, noting that there is much more civic engagement in these places, possibly due to the lower voting age. He also noted that sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds drive cars with license plates that read “Taxation Without Representation” yet are the ultimate example of being taxed with no representation in the government.

Upon questioning from Chairperson Allen, Mr. Shier testified that he believes sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds have “skin in the game”. He also stated that the bill would force politicians to be attentive towards issues that young people – and especially people of color – in the District face. Upon questioning from Councilmember Robert White, Mr. Shier testified that the voting age should be age sixteen rather than age fifteen or lower because of scientific evidence that sixteen-year-olds are able to make informed decisions.

Tiffany Misseme – Student / Volunteer, Young Women’s Project & Vote16DC

Ms. Misseme is a Ward 4 resident, a student at Woodrow Wilson High School, and the daughter of immigrants who cannot vote in the United States. She testified about educational policy in the District, noting that only 60% of Wilson seniors graduated on time this year, in large part because of the attendance policy. She believes this policy ignores socio-economic barriers to school attendance. She also noted that there is a disparity in the quality of education between schools east and west of the Anacostia River. Lastly, she testified that this is not only a civic engagement issue but one of racial justice. She pointed out that only 7.7% of registered Ward 8 voters voted in the primary this year. She believes that allowing sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds to vote would increase black turnout and force candidates to be more considerate of the District’s nearly 9,000 sixteen- and seventeen-year-old black residents.

Upon questioning, Ms. Misseme testified that lowering the voting age would not require changing the definition of adulthood. She also noted that she has conversations about politics every day and would be a well-informed voter. She stated that sixteen-year-olds are permitted to drive, choose whether to be an organ donor, and pay taxes, so it makes sense to lower the voting age to sixteen (rather than, for example, fifteen).

Abu Ugdah – Student / Member, ACLU DMV High School Youth Union / Participant, Vote16DC

Mr. Ugdah, a homeschooled student, testified in support of the bill. He addressed the argument that sixteen-year-olds are not smart enough to vote by noting that literacy and IQ-based tests and qualifications to vote are unconstitutional. He further discussed the poor turnout in the District’s June primary election and noted that in places where the voting age has been lowered (such as Takoma Park), the turnout has been higher. He testified that sixteen is the ideal age to start voting because it corresponds with when students are learning about civics in school. In contrast, the age of eighteen is a stressful time in the life of a student: you are finishing high school and going to college. Voting might be the last thing you think about. He also pointed out that when a sixteen-year-old applies for a driver’s license, he or she is asked to decide whether to be an organ donor. He believes that if he can decide to donate his body parts, he should be able to vote.

When asked how he would become informed about candidates for the general election (by which time he will be eighteen), Mr. Ugdah stated that he used the voting guide from the Board of Elections and also is engaged in the vibrant political culture in the District. He believes sixteen is the right age to begin voting because it is when parents begin to treat their children as adults.

Elijah Robinson – Student / Participant, Life Pieces to Masterpieces / Participant, Vote16DC

Mr. Robinson testified that he believes that sixteen-year-olds have as much civics knowledge as eighteen-year-olds. He believes that because he pays taxes and cannot vote, he is taxed without representation. He cares about safety in his community, and he feels safe because of his participating in the Life Pieces to Masterpieces program. He knows that many young people in Wards 7 and 8 could benefit from such a program, yet there are not enough programs for everyone. With his vote, he would vote in favor of more funding for after-school programs and mentorship programs. He believes that sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds definitely have “skin in the game”.

Tim Male – Former Councilmember, Takoma Park City Council

Mr. Male testified about his experience as the author of a bill that lowered the voting age for municipal elections in Takoma Park, MD. He stated that, during the debate on the proposal, they heard many arguments in opposition to lowering the voting age, including that teens are irresponsible, ill-informed, subject to pressure from peers and parents, and apathetic. They even heard an argument that people did not want to stand in line to vote with teens because of the way they dress. However, they also heard from well-informed, articulate, and diverse residents who wanted to participate in democracy – and these people happened to be sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds. The Council adopted the proposal for their 2013 elections and was the first city to lower the voting age. He testified about the benefits they have seen in the three general elections and one special election that have taken place since. First, the turnout for sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds has been greater than that of older voters in each election. About 45% of sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds have turned out, in contrast to approximately 20% of all voters. In 2013, sixteen- and seventeen-year-old turnout was 400% higher than that of older voters. He pointed to research from Austria and Scotland, which also found higher turnout by this population once the voting age was lowered. He believes this makes sense because eighteen-year-olds have often left home and have little identification with the city or state in which they live for college for a temporary period of time. In contrast, sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds still live at home, in a place with people they strongly identify with, and in which they are informed about the community in which they vote.

Mr. Male further testified that there have been other benefits, as well. He stated that sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds have started to come to candidate debates. They testify at public meetings. They reach out to elected officials to ask for assistance or services. They have organized Rock the Vote events. They have even hosted and moderated candidate debates. Mr. Male believes that lowering the voting age has created meaningful engagement with teens and has conveyed the message that “we are listening”. He also believes that the change in voting age has created economic benefits – many people raising families have told him they moved to Takoma Park because of the lowered voting age and other youth-oriented policies.

Patrick Paschall – Former Councilmember, Hyattsville City Council

Mr. Paschall, a former Councilmember on the Hyattsville City Council and the champion of that city's effort to lower the voting age, testified in support of the bill. He highlighted the arguments made in opposition to and in favor of the effort in Hyattsville. He noted that sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds use all the services the city provides, they pay taxes, and they drive on the roads, so it makes sense that their voices should be heard in the city government. He also stated that choosing the age sixteen may seem arbitrary but that there are many areas of life on which we place arbitrary age restrictions. We allow sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds to work and drive a "deadly weapon" on the road, so why not draw the line for voting at this age, as well.

Mr. Paschall also countered the often-heard argument that sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds will not turn out to vote if enfranchised. He stated that every political science study he has read on the subject has found this is not true – that the younger a person starts voting, the more likely he or she is to continue to vote as a habit. He also stated that these studies have shown that non-voters are influenced to vote by those they live with who vote. Therefore, lowering the voting age creates a cumulative effect on democracy. Younger people participate more in elections and influence others in their households to do so, as well, thus driving voter turnout rates higher in all demographics.

Mr. Paschall additionally noted that the argument that sixteen-year-olds will vote just like their parents has been empirically refuted in studies in both Scotland and Austria. There is evidence that sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds make informed, independent choices. He added that many of the arguments against lowering the voting age have a common thread: the idea that "I don't think they will vote the way I want them to vote". He noted that this argument assumes that disagreeing with the way a person may vote is reason to not allow them to vote. This is clearly not the precedent we would like to set. Instead, we should allow people to vote based on their stake in the game. We should embrace and lift the voices of sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds, and allowing them to vote is the most powerful way to do so.

Representative David Bonior – Former Congressman (D-MI)

Former Congressman Bonior testified in support of the bill. He has been involved in Mikva Challenge since 2004, where the motto is "democracy is a verb, you have to do it". In this program, young people get valuable experience in elections. He stated that, through the program, students work in elections, help people vote, and run voter registration drives. He believes that students are ready to engage, have enthusiasm, are thoughtful, and are a great example to friends and family. He testified that, in the District, students are well-versed on and have thoughtful dialogues about issues such as gun violence, education, racial issues, and the environment. He believes students are ready to participate and just need a green light from the Council. He ended by noting that we should spread democracy; it is important that people stand up against the attack on democracy that is being waged today and expand opportunity rather than restrict opportunity.

Robyn Lingo – Executive Director, Mikva Challenge DC

Ms. Lingo testified in support of the bill. She stated that her organization's mission is to develop youth to be informed, empowered, and active citizens, and its cornerstone is the belief that young people care about the word and their voices matter. Mikva Challenge serves more than 15,000 students in Chicago, Los Angeles, and the District. Through this program, District youth have shown there care deeply about the issues facing their communities and are uniquely capable of identifying solutions to these issues. She further testified that Mikva Challenge has worked with DCPS to incorporate civics into their core curriculum. She strongly believes that lowering the voting age will ensure that youth voices and experiences are heard and valued by our elected leaders.

Daniel Hart – Professor of Psychology, Rutgers University

Professor Hart testified about his recently published book, *Renewing Democracy in Young America* (Oxford University Press, 2017). He stated that the book considers the arguments for and against lowering the voting age and concludes that the voting age should be lowered to sixteen. He discussed four reasons to lower the voting age. First, while sixteen-year-olds have more immature brains than older people do, these immaturities affect quickly-made judgments, particularly in the presence of peers. Voting is not this kind of judgment – people have plenty of time to think about the decision, and they do it by themselves. Second, sixteen-year-olds are just as interested in politics as twenty-year-olds and know just as much about civics. They are able to use policy preferences to choose appropriate candidates. Third, lowering the voting age creates lifelong voters. Austrian research has showed that young people who voted at sixteen were more likely to vote at eighteen. Fourth, sixteen-year-olds have the knowledge and skills to contribute effectively to the governance of the District – and the District should send a message that we value the participation of all qualified voters.

Jenny Gonzalez – Student / Participant, Young Women's Project / Participant, Vote16DC

Ms. Gonzalez, a Ward 1 resident and student at Wilson High School, testified in support of the bill. She stated that she would vote for politicians who would improve the school system. She believes students understand the issues in schools best, such as inequality between schools. She noted that schools in Ward 6, 7, and 8 offer fewer advanced placement courses compared to other schools like Wilson. This limits the opportunities of every student to succeed. She also testified that many people in the Latino community, of which she is a part, are not able to vote for immigration status reasons, so she and others in her community must be their voices. She believes young people are informed, engaged, and mature enough to vote. At sixteen, the part of the brain used to make calm decisions is already well-developed.

QueSton Bell – Student / Participant, Life Pieces to Masterpieces / Participant, Vote16DC

Mr. Bell, a student at Cesar Chavez Public Charter High School, testified in support of the bill. He stated that the bill will create a stronger government that appeals to the voices of more people. He is a member of this democracy, yet he is not represented in his government. As a black young man born and raised in Ward 5, he has seen friends and family pushed out of their

neighborhoods due to gentrification. Because of this, he feels that now, more than ever, youth of underserved communities need representation. Issues such as the criminalization of black youth, education reform, and access to healthcare all especially affect young people of color.

Monae Scott – Student / Participant, Young Women's Project / Participant, Vote16DC

Ms. Scott, a Ward 7 resident and student at SEED Public Charter School, testified in support of the bill. She believes the bill will give young people a voice in decisions being made that impact them. This is particularly important for education, as she believes students know what is going on in schools and how problems can be fixed. She noted that attendance and curriculum are two critical education issues, especially in Wards 7 and 8. She also testified that young people deserve the right to vote because they are already contributing as leaders and activists in their communities. She is a peer educator and has seen groups of young people come together to talk about difficult issues like sex education, health, finances, and healthy relationships. She believes young people are taking the initiative to make their communities better places.

Chloe Ifill – Student / Participant, Young Women's Project / Participant, Vote16DC

Ms. Ifill, a Ward 7 resident and student at Wilson High School, testified in support of the bill. She stated that she has collected signatures from many people in her school, including teachers and students, in support of the bill. She supports this bill because most eighteen-year-olds are on their way to college and do not usually vote. This bill would encourage a habit of voting at an earlier age. She also would like to change the education system to ensure equality between schools across the city. She noted the challenges she has faced by attending schools in Ward 3 while living in Ward 7, including not being able to participate in extracurriculars because of her long commute home.

Dave Chandrasekaran – Campaign Manager, Vote16DC

Mr. Chandrasekaran testified in support of the bill. He stated that while working on the Vote16DC campaign, youth leaders have impressed him with their activism and have taught him about how to be a better community member himself. He testified that youth are often the most affected by problems in our community, such as educational inequality, gun violence, domestic abuse, gentrification, and lack of employment opportunities. He stated that youth in the District have been mobilizing their peers to demand change for years; however, politicians have not had much of an incentive to listen. He believes lowering the voting age will change this and will encourage politicians to listen to and address their concerns. He further noted the racial justice implications of the bill, stating that a majority of youth come from communities that have been left behind in a rapidly changing city. Empowering these youth to vote will prompt politicians to prioritize their needs and address longstanding inequality.

Mr. Chandrasekaran also testified about whether lowering the voting age would change the definition of adulthood. He clearly stated that the coalition's position is that the bill would change only the voting age, not the definition of adulthood for other purposes. He testified that the youth testifying at the hearing have shown that they are mature enough to vote. He cited an expert in

youth development who believes that research supports the idea that by age sixteen, a young person is cognitively ready to vote.

Lauryn Redford – Student, Thurgood Marshall Academy

Ms. Redford, a Ward 5 resident, testified in support of the bill. Ms. Redford stated that she is working with Moms Demand Action on a mural project to commemorate six of the young people murdered in the 2017-2018 school year, including her boyfriend, Zaire Kelly. She testified about her involvement in her community, having met with Parkland High School students and spoken at the March 4 Our Lives rally. She spoke to the Parkland students about how inner-city youth have been silenced on the issue of violence and how everyday shootings do not receive the attention of politicians. She cited the statistic that 116 homicides took place in the District last year, two of which were students at her school. She stated that after Mr. Kelly was killed, she went to local officials to find a space to celebrate his life. She stated that “her expectations came crashing down”, as she was “brushed off by” elected officials. She believes that the power to vote is critical in situations like this – officials who disregard young people who are trying to defy the odds and create a positive city should be elected out of office. Ms. Redford further put the bill into the context of statehood. She noted that this is an opportunity to expand representation in our city and set a standard for other states to follow.

Marcia Huff – Director of Youth Poverty Programs, Young Women's Project

Ms. Huff testified in support of the bill. She noted that the bill has generated a lot of excitement among the youth staff of her organization, who have mobilized hundreds of peers to support the bill, conducted dozens of interviews, educated local officials, and engaged Vote16DC coalition members. She testified that, for the last six years, she has worked with fifteen-, sixteen-, and seventeen-year-olds to improve their lives and the lives of their peers. She has been impressed by their dedication, focus, intelligence, determination, and altruism. She has seen them work one and even two jobs while going to school, caring for family members, and navigating complex education and social service systems. She has also seen these young people work to pass numerous policies.

Ms. Huff also testified that young people bring an important and unique perspective to the political arena – they are not “ beholden to the status quo” and have high expectations for their lives, the institutions surrounding them, and their political leaders. She noted that the District has many problems that need to be addressed involving youth, including education, reducing youth homicide, increasing employment, reducing teen pregnancy, and improving outcomes for system-involved youth. She believes young people deserve the opportunity to weigh in on these issues. Lastly, Ms. Huff testified that we should pass this bill because it promotes inclusion, opportunity, and equity – all values we hold dear in the District.

Michah Carter – Student / Participant, Young Women's Project / Participant, Vote16DC

Ms. Carter, a Ward 7 resident and Wilson High School student, testified in support of the bill. She discussed her advocacy involving education equity, noting that she has to travel 45 mins each way to school every day because her neighborhood school does not “promote her growth as

a scholar”. She stated that schools east of the river lack the funding and opportunities that are available to schools like Wilson and School Without Walls. She further testified that she believes in proper representation – many youth work, pay taxes, and have other responsibilities that should allow them representation. She lastly testified that she would like to have a say in where her money goes because she believes many youth programs, schools, and music programs have insufficient funding.

Tyesha Ingram – Student, HD Woodson High School / Participant, Vote16DC

Ms. Ingram, a Ward 7 resident, testified in support of the bill. She stated that she is a peer education, who educates her peers about safe sex. She believes that young people should have the opportunities to vote on issues that affect them, such as putting sex education class in schools. She noted that Young Women’s Project passed a new Health Education Standards, which were not implemented, and she believes this is a reason pregnancy rates are still so high. She also testified about the lack of opportunities in schools east of the river compared to schools west of the river. She noted that her school does not have a lot of electives that would “help us in the world”, like financial literacy, cooking, or sewing. She stated that another issue that needs to be fixed in schools is the attendance policy.

Brandon Klugman – Vote16DC Campaign Coordinator, Generation Citizen

Mr. Klugman testified in support of the bill. He has worked for the past year with youth leaders from across the District and local community organizations to build the coalition. He believes lowering the voting age will strengthen democracy and create the habit of voting in young people. At age sixteen, a person is in a much better position to vote for the first time, and data from cities in the U.S. and other countries support this. He noted that the Board of Elections already pre-registers sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds to vote, which has proven to increase voter turnout. He believes this bill is the natural next step. He testified that young people have shown that they care deeply about local issues and that they are eager to engage in the political process. He thinks the District should embrace this by expanding the right to vote.

Andrew Bickle – Community Engagement Coordinator, Life Pieces to Masterpieces

Mr. Bickle testified in support of the bill. He stated that youth care first and foremost about education, and they understand the challenges facing our education system more than anyone else in the city. From safe passage and attendance policies, to inequities across the District, they care about the issues. He also stated that youth are experts at their own lives and know how to navigate social pressures and institutions that have historically not been there to support them. Mr. Bickle believes that with this bill we can stay true to our belief in “no taxation without representation” and increase voter turnout.

David Adams – Student / Participant, Life Pieces to Masterpieces / Participant, Vote16DC

Mr. Adams, a Ward 7 resident and student at McKinley Technology High School, testified in support of the bill. He stated that there is not enough funding for STEM programs in schools. He has to take two trains to get to his high school because his neighborhood school, which is a

two-minute walk from home, does not support his career goals. He believes that if students had the right to vote, they could address issues like the lack of school funding in Wards 7 and 8. He also discussed school suspension policy. He would vote for more progressive discipline policies in schools, if he could vote. He further testified that he also cares about safe, affordable housing and transportation, in addition to education policy.

Michael Olugbuti – Participant, Life Pieces to Masterpieces / Participant, Vote16DC

Mr. Olugbuti testified in support of the bill. He believes more people should be able to voice their opinions and have an impact on what happens in their lives. There are young people in the District who have ideas and experience regarding issues impacting their communities, yet they are unable to vote. He stated that young people are informed and passionate, and they shoulder major responsibilities.

Samantha Davis – Executive Director, Black Swan Academy

Ms. Davis testified that young people are not only our future, but they are also our present. She stated that any issue facing the District impacts young people—particularly young people of color—the most. She believes that, because young people are so greatly affected, they are best situated to have a seat at the table in the decision-making process.

Blessen Davis – Student, IDEA Public Charter School / Participant, Black Swan Academy

Ms. Davis, a Ward 7 resident and student at IDEA Public Charter School, testified in support of the bill. She discussed how she has been impacted by violence in her community. One of her top priorities is to end gun violence. She stated that if she were able to vote, she would vote for candidates who had concrete solutions to solve the issue of gun violence.

Ceon Palmore – Student / Participant, Black Swan Academy

Ms. Palmore, a Ward 7 resident, testified in support of the bill because she believes sixteen-year-olds should be able to voice their opinions and concerns about what is going on in their community and schools. She believes young people are better able to identify the needs of our schools than adults can. She stated that, though she has been told often that she is too young, she has experience in political organizing. Lastly, she stated that sixteen is a good age to be voting because young people can establish the habit in a more stable environment, supported by family, peers, and teachers.

Tionna Gray - Student, Anacostia High School / Participant, Black Swan Academy

Ms. Gray, a Ward 8 resident, testified in support of the bill. She stated that adults do not listen to young people when they try to express their opinions. She would like to be able to choose politicians who would provide beneficial policies to her community. She talked about her and her peers' fight against a strict dress code and how she met with Councilmember Grosso about not allowing schools to suspend students for not following the dress code. She testified that if she could vote, she could organize her friends to vote for issues that matter to them.

Tenlea Radack – Student, Woodrow Wilson High School

Ms. Radack testified in support of the bill because she believes that sixteen-year-olds can make sound decisions about the changes they want to see in their city. She noted that no politician has ever asked her about her opinions on issues. Instead, she and her peers at Wilson High School take action by themselves, if possible. She cited an example of a recent proposal to change classroom structures at Wilson, which the students opposed but were told by teachers that their parents needed oppose it if they wanted to successfully stop the change. She believes she and her peers have opinions that deserve to be heard and considered, and that this bill will provide a voice for these opinions.

Helisa Cruz – Student, BASIS D.C.

Ms. Cruz, a sixteen-year-old Ward 5 resident, testified in support of the bill. She stated that she is civically engaged in her community and is starting an ACLU club at her school. She stated that she supports the bill because she wants to ensure that her peers can exercise their rights. She believes that sixteen-year-olds are ready, willing, and able to do so. She noted that there are pressing issues facing her generation like gun violence, homelessness, and education. She believes she should be able to vote legislators into office who advocate for her and her community. She asked the Council not to silence her and her peers.

Ashari James – Student, BASIS D.C.

Ms. James, a Ward 8 resident, testified in support of the bill. She believes that sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds are eager to participate in politics, and the argument that they are not politically inclined is not true. She also stated that she believes sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds would turn out to vote, if they were given the opportunity to do so.

Nisa Quarles – Student, National Cathedral School

Ms. Quarles testified in support of the bill. She stated that the government believes that sixteen-year-olds are capable enough to work, pay taxes, and drive – all tasks that involve critical decision-making. She also noted that in the age of social media, she and her peers are more aware of political issues through news alerts, hashtags, and text messages. She testified that she believes sixteen is a better age than eighteen to start voting because people are still at home and in school learning about civics. Lastly, she stated that sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds have plenty of “life experience”.

Molly Deegan – Student, National Cathedral School

Ms. Deegan, a 14-year-old student, testified in support of the bill. She talked about what it means to be a teenager: sitting through classes, experiencing peer pressure, and growing physically and mentally. She noted that now it also means fearing for your life at school and checking the news to see the newest school shooting. She noted that it now also means wondering if you get pregnant will you be able to make a choice about your own body. It means hoping adults around

you will represent you with their vote. She testified that she and her peers are engaged and have a “fire within us to fight for what we believe in.” She feels powerless without political representation, and she knows her peers share her frustration.

Ciara Hargrove – Student, National Cathedral School

Ms. Hargrove, a Ward 5 resident, testified in support of the bill. She stated that it disheartens her to see so little representation from her cohort because so many students are politically engaged. She addressed concerns about maturity levels – she countered that students are allowed to drive on the District’s streets, which indicates a level of maturity. She further testified that there is a “political fire that burns inside the youth”, and she cited the activism of students during the Civil Rights Movement, as well as the March for Our Lives student organizers.

Lyla Bhalla-Ladd – Student, National Cathedral School

Ms. Bhalla-Ladd testified in support of the bill, stating that passing the bill would increase voter turnout of both young people and their parents. She then spoke about the District’s youth involvement: they have organized marches, walk-outs, die-ins, and other protests. They have become one of the most politically aware generations, given the current political climate. She stated that teens today have been exposed to more violence, discrimination, and punishment than ever before, and she particularly focused on the twenty-three school shootings that had occurred in 2018 alone. She called it “hypocritical” to not allow teens to vote when we treat them as adults in other ways.

Alison Pierce – Student, National Cathedral School

Ms. Pierce testified in support of the bill. She stated that she attended her first political meeting when she was four years old. She believes she and her peers are interested in civics and engaged in issues going on in the District.

Aaron Huertas – Public Witness

Mr. Huertas, a resident of Brookland, testified that his work has included youth voter registration and mobilization, science advocacy, and assisting local governments in implementing climate plans. He stated that when we disenfranchise young people, we undervalue their issues, such as student loan debt, gun violence in schools, and climate change. He noted that we live in the District, so we know about disenfranchisement.

Angel Henriquez – Public Witness

Mr. Henriquez testified in support of the bill. He stated that youth have a long history of political and social engagement in the United States, including the Civil Rights Movement. He believes young people are well-informed and have demonstrated an ability to organize to make their voices heard. He testified that he and other young people across the city organized a forum, which very few elected officials attended. He believes this demonstrates elected officials’ lack of

attention to young people and their views. He stated that we need to have politicians accountable to young people.

Melissa Wyatt – Staff Member, Rock the Vote

Ms. Wyatt testified in support of the bill. She stated that most of her work at Rock the Vote consists of researching how to civically mobilize young people. She testified that her research has repeatedly demonstrated to her that young people are engaged and interested in civics – they simply need to be given the chance to participate. She also testified that her research has shown a “trickle-up effect” that occurs when young people are more engaged. The engagement of young people appears to trickle-up to other family members who might not have been voters or engaged community members.

Hannah Kohanzadeh – Policy Research & Development Assistant, DC Fiscal Policy Institute

Ms. Kohanzadeh testified that lowering the voting age will improve democracy in the District in three ways: (1) voting earlier reinforces voting as a habit; (2) expanding our civic base promotes better governance; and (3) lowering our voting age can empower more of our residents to vote. She cited multiple studies that show voting is a gradually acquired behavior that must be practiced. She noted that eighteen is not an ideal time to start voting, because it is a period of transition as eighteen-year-olds move toward careers or higher education. Instead, allowing sixteen-year-olds to vote while they are still at home in high school is ideal. She testified that it is also important to recognize that sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds contribute to and are active members of our community – they work, drive, pay taxes, and use city services. They deserve the opportunity to influence the laws that impact them. She lastly noted that more than half of students in the District live east of the river, thus, lowering the voting age will strengthen representation in Wards 7 and 8.

Bill Bystricky – President, Growing Democracy

Mr. Bystricky, a former high school government teacher, testified in support of the bill. He stated that too many youth feel locked out of democracy. In turn, youth respond often with bitterness and develop apathy. Voter turnout keeps getting lower. He testified that this trend can be turned around – for example, in cities like Takoma Park and Hyattsville, sixteen-year-olds have been invited to participate in elections, and the results have been positive. In these cities, people younger than eighteen are turning out to vote at higher rates than any other age group, and voting is becoming a family event. Young voters are even encouraging their non-voting parents to participate. He believes this movement is “rejuvenating democracy”, and the District should take a leading role. He lastly cited studies on sixteen-year-old voters from Scotland and Austria that showed these voters do their own research and make independent choices just like adult voters. Brain science has also shown that sixteen-year-olds have the cognitive voting skills of older voters.

Brian Conner – Outreach Coordinator, National Youth Rights Association

Mr. Conner testified in support of the bill, noting that youth are affected by public policy just as much as adults. He stated that we assume people over the age of eighteen are capable of deliberate and sound decisions at the ballot box. However, a person is always influenced by his or her surroundings – for example, a sixty-year-old white male Harvard professor cannot understand the experience of an immigrant mother crossing the border or a working-class man in Ohio or a black teenager in the District. He noted that a sixteen-year-old in the District may not have an advanced degree, but they are experts on their own lives. He believes teenagers are patronized, ignored, and treated as if their voices do not matter, and he is confident that young people would turn out to vote if given the chance. To deny them the right to vote is to deny them control over their lives and a voice in matters that affect them. This is discrimination based on age, which is just as irrational as sexism and racism, and we should not stand for it.

Alex Koroknay-Palicz – Board Member, National Youth Rights Association

Mr. Koroknay-Palicz testified that the right to vote is one of the most fundamental rights we have as Americans – yet, this right was very limited from the start of our country. Most people were left out of democracy. He referenced the struggles of the Civil Rights Movement and women's suffrage to show how the right to vote became more inclusive. He noted that lowering the voting age to sixteen is the next struggle to expand the right to vote. He cited Takoma Park as the first location to lower its voting age. He testified that the District would be a trailblazer – it is our nation's capital with a population of almost forty times that of Takoma Park. In addition, the District would be the first place to lower the voting age for President.

Michael Place – Generation E Political Action Committee

Mr. Place testified that he “voted” in the 2016 primary election when he was sixteen by standing with his mother in the voting booth and helping her make decisions. He had spent a lot of time researching each candidate and had been taking an AP U.S. Government course. Despite this, he could not vote. He testified on behalf of the Generation E Political Action Committee, which is a PAC run entirely by high school and college students in the District. He noted that the PAC focuses on youth issues, and the “E” stands for education, environment, and engagement. He testified that on environment and education issues – pressing issues for young people – young people vote differently than older Americans, yet lack the same representation. He noted that even young Republicans have been found to vote more liberally on climate change issues than older Republicans. He stated that education is “the ultimate youth issue” and is not receiving the emphasis it deserves in current politics. Again, he noted, young people vote differently on this issue than do older people, making it critical that young voices are heard. Lastly, he testified that he is confident that if given the chance, young people would take advantage of the right to vote. Being able to cast their first ballot while living in a stable home environment and learning about government in school will encourage young people to participate.

Anagea Dean – Public Witness

Ms. Dean testified in support of the bill. She cited the “long road” to enfranchisement of black people in the United States and spoke about the District’s disenfranchisement with its lack of meaningful representation in Congress. She believes that lowering the voting age to allow sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds to vote in the District would be a step in the right direction to end taxation without representation.

Mary Beth Tinker – Public Witness

Ms. Tinker testified in support of the bill. She stated that one-third of the District’s youth live in poverty, and of all age groups, they are the most likely to do so. She believes to change this, youth need the right to vote. She discussed her own role in the fight for youth rights. When she was 13, she was suspended from school for wearing a black armband to mourn the dead in Vietnam. The ACLU took her case to the Supreme Court, and it resulted in a victory for the rights of students. She wants young people to know that there are many adults cheering them on, and history will applaud them.

Abby Kiesa – Representative, Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (“CIRCLE”)

Ms. Kiesa testified that her organization, CIRCLE, was founded to bring data and research to bear on how to increase youth voting and high-quality civic engagement. She highlighted two important points based on her experience: (1) voting is a habitual act; and (2) barriers to voting start even before a young adult turns eighteen. She noted that research has shown that the earlier in life someone starts to vote, the more likely it is he or she will become a lifelong voter. Norms among peers matter: for example, a study showed that young people have a higher turnout rate into their mid-30s if they went to schools where a majority of students believe they should vote. As to her second point, barriers include: outdated civics classes, negative perceptions of political leaders, little to no exposure to civics practices (such as collaborative decision-making in settings where their voices matter), and not systematically and authentically asking young people to participate.

Christian Robles – Public Witness

Mr. Robles testified in support of the bill. He spoke about a youth in government program he participated in with the YMCA and stated that, in his experience, youth are neither politically apathetic nor immature. Through the YMCA program, he is the Youth Mayor for 2018-2019. He affirmed that he has seen many youth who are politically engaged, invested in their futures, and mature enough to participate.

Derek Summerville – Public Witness

Mr. Summerville, a Ward 6 resident, testified that he has spent a decade working with youth around the country on civic engagement through YMCA’s Youth and Government program. This program serves more than 55,000 middle and high school students around the country, including in the District, and is designed to ensure that students learn about democracy and become

engaged citizens inspired to change their communities, schools, and the world. He stated that, though it is rewarding to watch students advocate for things they believe in, he feels like he has failed them. No matter how many times he tells them their voices matter, on Election Day, they know this is not true. He stated that sixteen-year-olds are more likely to be homeless, hungry, and harmed by violence than almost any other age demographic – they are “closest to the pain, yet all too often furthest from the power”.

Vasu Abhiraman – DC for Democracy

Mr. Abhiraman testified on behalf of DC Democracy, which voted unanimously to support the bill. He stated that many members were initially skeptical, remembering their own immaturity at the age of sixteen. To address these concerns, they invited several youth leaders of the Vote16DC campaign to their monthly meeting, who convinced the skeptics. Mr. Abhiraman stated that, in the District, we should not be shutting out more voices from the ballot box. He cited the low turnout at the primary election as a “wake up call”. He believes that lowering the voting age is one of many tactics we must take to increase voter engagement and instill civic habits.

Franco Ciammachilli – Public Witness

Mr. Ciammachilli testified that he recently ran (unsuccessfully) to be the Ward 6 Commiteeman on the DC Democratic State Committee, and one of his campaign promises was to engage high school students in the political process. During his campaign, he spoke to many young people who were often more aware and informed about politics and issues than their adult neighbors. He noted that, regardless, this conversation should not be about how informed our youth are – instead, it should be about how we define adulthood and the rights and privileges that come with that. He cited that sixteen-year-olds can hold jobs, can make decisions regarding intimacy and family planning, and can hold drivers’ licenses.

Kendell Bryan – Executive Director, Amy Jacques Garvey Institute

Mr. Bryan testified in support of this “landmark” bill and urged all Councilmembers to support it. He works with youth in Ward 8 and other Wards who have told him they want to vote. He spoke about morality – citing the war in Vietnam, when youth were being sent to die and were not able to vote. He noted that the voting age was eventually lowered to age eighteen, but there is still a need to further expand the franchise. He believes when the franchise is expanded, there is more opportunity to hear more voices. He testified that the bill is a forward step in democracy and in the arc of history bending towards justice. He ended by stating that there is no cogent reason in a progressive city like the District to not allow sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds to vote.

Carlos McKnight – Public Witness

Mr. McKnight, a Ward 5 resident and graduate of the Thurgood Marshall Academy in Ward 8, testified in support of the bill. He is currently a political science college student in Buffalo, NY. He recalled that when he was sixteen, he was politically engaged. He noted that he is proud of Chairperson Allen and the Council for introducing this important bill. He ended by stating that we are remembered by our license plate slogan, and if sixteen-year-olds are old enough to have a

job, pay taxes, and pay for District government salaries and services, they should have opportunity to have a voice.

Mia Millstein – Student, National Cathedral School

Ms. Millstein submitted written testimony in which she stated that she does not support the bill. She argued that the teenage brain is not fully developed until around the age of twenty-five, so allowing sixteen-year-olds to vote would be “detrimental to democracy” in the District. She stated that teens are heavily influenced by peer pressure and will be pressured by their friends and parents to vote a certain way. She also noted that the District is already predominantly liberal and lowering the voting age would not change this fact. Finally, she emphasized that teenagers are prone to make rash decisions.

Amanda de Castro – Student, National Cathedral School

Ms. de Castro submitted written testimony in support of the bill. She testified that she and her peers attended protests and became politically involved after the 2016 presidential election, but “there was only so much we could do”. She felt that when they called their representatives, they had no voting power to back them up, which lessened the impact of the calls. She stated that lowering the voting age would motivate young people to be engaged, to vote, and to take action.

Government Witnesses⁵⁷

Rachel Coll – Public Information Officer, Board of Elections

Ms. Coll testified on behalf of the Board of Elections’ Executive Director, Alice Miller. She stated that the bill would impact BOE in several ways: there would be an increase in the number of registered voters, an increase in the number of voter registration applications submitted and processed, and applications would need to be modified to reflect the new minimum voting age. She also noted that BOE would have to conduct a robust education and outreach effort to inform District residents about the new law.

Ms. Coll then addressed a concern about the potential inability of youth voters to provide identification/proof of residency. She noted that same-day registrants and certain first-time voters must provide identification/proof of residency that bears their name and residence address. The concern is that not all sixteen-year-olds will have obtained identification cards from the Department of Motor Vehicles (“DMV”), and they may not have any other acceptable form of identification/proof of residency. To address this concern, Ms. Coll stated, BOE could accept a Proof of D.C. Residency Certification, as is the practice of the DMV. The certifier to this form attests, under penalty of perjury, that the applicant resides with them in the District, and this person must provide identification/proof of residency. The Council would not have to act to allow BOE to implement this practice.

⁵⁷ The Attorney General voiced his personal support for the legislation. See <https://twitter.com/Vote16DC/status/997887977656373253>.

Ms. Coll ended by testifying that BOE stands ready to ensure the smooth and effective implementation of the bill, should it become law.

IMPACT ON EXISTING LAW

B22-0778 amends the District of Columbia Election Code of 1955, approved August 12, 1955 (69 Stat. 699; D.C. Official Code § 1-1001.01 *et seq.*), to allow sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds to vote. The bill also requires educational institutions, including schools in the District of Columbia Public Schools system, public charter schools, independent schools, private schools, parochial schools, and private instructors, to provide students sixteen years of age and older with voter registration applications, either paper or electronic. Furthermore, the bill allows sixteen-year-olds to serve as polling place workers and qualified petition circulators. Lastly, the bill amends voter registration notifications to reflect the new voting age and requires the Mayor to furnish certain information about deceased voters.

FISCAL IMPACT

The Committee adopts the attached fiscal impact statement of the Chief Financial Officer.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

Section 1 States the short title.

Section 2 Amends the District of Columbia Election Code of 1955 by lowering the voting age to sixteen years of age; allows individuals who are sixteen years of age or older to be qualified petition circulators; allows the Board of Elections to appoint sixteen-year-olds as polling place workers; requires educational institutions to provide their students sixteen years of age and older with voter registration applications; amends voter registration notifications to state that applicants shall not vote before their sixteenth birthday; and requires the Mayor to furnish information about each District resident sixteen years of age and older reported deceased to the Board of Elections.

Section 3 Provides the fiscal impact statement.

Section 4 Provides the effective date.

COMMITTEE ACTION

On November 1, 2018, the Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety held an Additional Meeting to consider and vote on B22-0778, the “Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018”. The meeting was called to order at 9:43 a.m. Chairperson Charles Allen recognized a quorum consisting of himself and Councilmembers Vincent Gray and David Grosso. Chairperson Allen, without objection, moved the Committee Report and Print for B22-0778 en bloc with leave for staff to make technical and clarifying changes. Councilmember Grosso commented that, as the Chair of the Education Committee, he hears from students frequently about how local issues –

particularly education, healthcare, and crime – affect their lives. He spoke about the town halls he hosted over the summer led by young people. He also noted that at a time when many places are suppressing the vote, it is even more important for the District to do the opposite and expand the vote. Councilmember Gray thanked Chairperson Allen for his leadership on this issue and spoke about the well-attended youth-led discussions he used to hold one Saturday each month when he was the Chairman of the Council. After an opportunity for discussion, the Committee voted 3-0 to approve the Committee Report and Print with the Members voting as follows:

YES: Chairperson Allen and Councilmembers Gray and Grosso

NO: None

PRESENT: None

ABSENT: Councilmembers Anita Bonds and Mary M. Cheh


LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

- (A) B22-0778, as introduced
- (B) Notice of Public Hearing on B22-0778, as published in the *District of Columbia Register*
- (C) Revised Notice of Public Hearing on B22-0778, as published in the *District of Columbia Register*
- (D) Agenda and Witness List
- (E) Witness Testimony
- (F) Fiscal Impact Statement
- (G) Legal Sufficiency Determination
- (H) Comparative Print of B22-0778
- (I) Committee Print of B22-0778

ATTACHMENT A

COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington D.C. 20004

Memorandum

To : Members of the Council

From : Nyasha Smith, Secretary to the Council
Date : April 11, 2018
Subject : Referral of Proposed Legislation

Notice is given that the attached proposed legislation was introduced in the Legislative Meeting on Tuesday, April 10, 2018. Copies are available in Room 10, the Legislative Services Division.

TITLE: "Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018", B22-0778

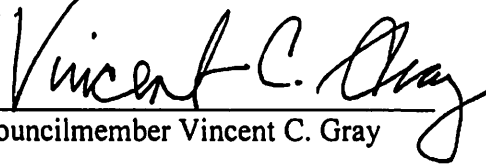
INTRODUCED BY: Councilmembers Allen, Grosso, R. White, Bonds, Gray, Nadeau, and T. White

The Chairman is referring this legislation to the Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety.

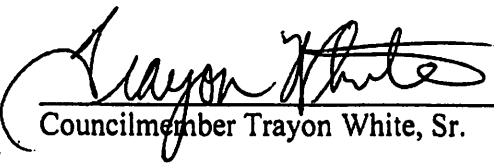
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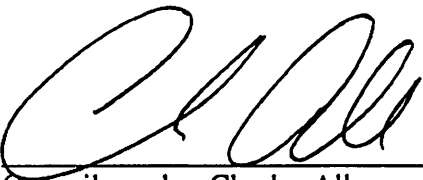
cc: General Counsel
Budget Director
Legislative Services

1 
2 Councilmember Anita Bonds

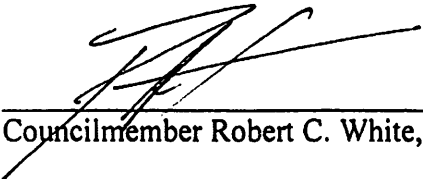
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5 Councilmember Vincent C. Gray

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10 Councilmember Brianne K. Nadeau

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15 Councilmember Trayon White, Sr.


Councilmember Charles Allen


Councilmember David Grosso


Councilmember Robert C. White, Jr.

16
17
18 A BILL
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21

22
23 IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
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27

28 To amend the District of Columbia Election Code of 1955 to allow sixteen- and seventeen-year-
29 olds to vote.

30 BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this
31 act may be cited as the "Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018".

32 Sec. 2. The District of Columbia Election Code of 1955, approved August 12, 1955 (69
33 Stat. 699; D.C. Official Code § 1-1001.01 *et seq.*), is amended as follows:

34 (a) Section 2 (D.C. Official Code § 1-1001.02) is amended as follows:

35 (1) Subparagraph (2)(A) is amended to read as follows:

36 "(2)(A) Is at least 16 years of age;"

37 (2) A new paragraph (31) is added to read as follows:

38 “(31) “Local education agency” means the District of Columbia Public Schools system or
39 any individual or group of public charter schools operating under a single charter.”.

40 (b) Section 7 (D.C. Official Code § 1-1001.07) is amended as follows:

41 (1) Subsection (a-2) is repealed.

42 (2) Subsection (d) is amended by adding a new paragraph (15) to read as follows:

43 “(15) Each local education agency shall provide its students 16 years of age and
44 older with a voter registration application.”.

45 Sec. 3. Fiscal impact statement.

46 The Council adopts the fiscal impact statement in the committee report as the fiscal impact
47 statement required by section 4a of the General Legislative Procedures Act of 1975, approved
48 October 16, 2006 (120 Stat. 2038; D.C. Official Code § 1-301.47a).

49 Sec. 4. Effective date.

50 This act shall take effect following approval by the Mayor (or in the event of veto by the
51 Mayor, action by the Council to override the veto), a 30-day period of congressional review as
52 provided in section 602(c)(1) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, approved December 24,
53 1973 (87 Stat. 813; D.C. Official Code §1-206.02(c)(1)), and publication in the District of
54 Columbia Register.

ATTACHMENT B

**Council of the District of Columbia
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY & PUBLIC SAFETY
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20004**

**COUNCILMEMBER CHARLES ALLEN, CHAIRPERSON
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY & PUBLIC SAFETY**

ANNOUNCES A PUBLIC HEARING ON

BILL 22-0778, THE "YOUTH VOTE AMENDMENT ACT OF 2018"

**Wednesday, June 27, 2018, 10:00 a.m.
Room 500, John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004**

On Wednesday, June 27, 2018, Councilmember Charles Allen, Chairperson of the Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety, will hold a public hearing on Bill 22-0778, the "Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018". The hearing will take place in Room 500 of the John A. Wilson Building, 1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., at 10:00 a.m.

The stated purpose of Bill 22-0778, the "Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018", is to amend the District of Columbia Election Code of 1955 to allow sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds to vote.

The Committee invites the public to testify or to submit written testimony. Anyone wishing to testify at the hearing should contact the Committee via email at judiciary@dccouncil.us or at (202) 724-7808, and provide their name, telephone number, organizational affiliation, and title (if any), by close of business Friday, June 22. Representatives of organizations will be allowed a maximum of five minutes for oral testimony, and individuals will be allowed a maximum of three minutes. Witnesses should bring twenty double-sided copies of their written testimony and, if possible, also submit a copy of their testimony electronically in advance to judiciary@dccouncil.us.

For witnesses who are unable to testify at the hearing, written statements will be made part of the official record. Copies of written statements should be submitted to the Committee at judiciary@dccouncil.us. The record will close at the end of the business day on July 12.

ATTACHMENT C

**Council of the District of Columbia
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY & PUBLIC SAFETY
REVISED NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20004**

**COUNCILMEMBER CHARLES ALLEN, CHAIRPERSON
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY & PUBLIC SAFETY**

ANNOUNCES A PUBLIC HEARING ON

BILL 22-0778, THE "YOUTH VOTE AMENDMENT ACT OF 2018"

**Wednesday, June 27, 2018, 2:00 p.m.
Room 500, John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004**

On Wednesday, June 27, 2018, Councilmember Charles Allen, Chairperson of the Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety, will hold a public hearing on Bill 22-0778, the "Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018". The hearing will take place in Room 500 of the John A. Wilson Building, 1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., at 2:00 p.m. *Please note that this notice has been revised to reflect the updated start time of 2:00 p.m. rather than the previously noticed start time of 10 a.m.*

The stated purpose of Bill 22-0778, the "Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018", is to amend the District of Columbia Election Code of 1955 to allow sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds to vote.

The Committee invites the public to testify or to submit written testimony. Anyone wishing to testify at the hearing should contact the Committee via email at judiciary@dccouncil.us or at (202) 724-7808, and provide their name, telephone number, organizational affiliation, and title (if any), by **close of business Friday, June 22**. Representatives of organizations will be allowed a maximum of five minutes for oral testimony, and individuals will be allowed a maximum of three minutes. Witnesses should bring **twenty double-sided copies** of their written testimony and, if possible, also submit a copy of their testimony electronically in advance to judiciary@dccouncil.us.

For witnesses who are unable to testify at the hearing, written statements will be made part of the official record. Copies of written statements should be submitted to the Committee at judiciary@dccouncil.us. **The record will close at the end of the business day on July 12.**

ATTACHMENT D

**Council of the District of Columbia
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY & PUBLIC SAFETY
AGENDA & WITNESS LIST
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20004**

**COUNCILMEMBER CHARLES ALLEN, CHAIRPERSON
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY & PUBLIC SAFETY**

ANNOUNCES A PUBLIC HEARING ON

**BILL 22-0778, THE "YOUTH VOTE
AMENDMENT ACT OF 2018"**

**Wednesday, June 27, 2018, 2 p.m.
Room 500, John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004**

- I. CALL TO ORDER**
- II. OPENING REMARKS**
- III. WITNESS TESTIMONY**
 - i. Public Witnesses**
 - 1. Alik Schier, Student, Young Women's Project participant, Vote16DC
 - 2. Tiffany Missembe, Student, Young Women's Project, Vote16DC
 - 3. Abu Uqdah, Student, ACLU DMV High School Youth Union Participant, Vote16DC
 - 4. Elijah Robinson, Student, Life Pieces to Masterpieces, Vote16DC
 - 5. Tim Male, Former Councilmember, Takoma Park City Council
 - 6. Patrick Paschall, Former Councilmember, Hyattsville City Council
 - 7. Joe Weedon, Member, State Board of Education (Ward 6)
 - 8. Congressman David Bonior, Public Witness
 - 9. James Harnett, Commissioner, ANC 2A08
 - 10. Jenny Gonzalez, Student, Young Women's Project participant, Vote16DC
 - 11. QueSton Bell, Student, Life Pieces to Masterpieces, Vote16DC

12. Monae Scott, Student, Young Women's Project, Vote16DC
13. Chloe Ifill, Student, Young Women's Project participant, Vote16DC
14. Marcia Huff, Director of Youth Poverty Programs, Young Women's Project
15. Micah Carter, Student, Young Women's Project, Vote16DC
16. Tyesha Ingram, Student, Young Women's Project, Vote16DC
17. Lauryn Redford, Student
18. Dave Chandrasekaran, Campaign Manager, Vote16DC
19. Brandon Klugman, Vote16 Campaign Coordinator, Generation Citizen
20. Lauren Grimes, Founder, Community Enrichment Project, Vote16DC
21. Kerry Turner, Student, Community Enrichment Project
22. Andrew Blickle, Community Engagement Coordinator, Life Pieces to Masterpieces, Vote16DC
23. David Adams, Student, Life Pieces to Masterpieces, Vote16DC
24. Michael Olugbuyi, Student, Life Pieces to Masterpieces, Vote16DC
25. Samantha Davis, Executive Director, Black Swan Academy, Vote16DC
26. Jessica Parks, Student, Black Swan Academy, Vote16DC
27. Blessen Denney, Student, Black Swan Academy, Vote16DC
28. Ceon Palmore, Student, Black Swan Academy, Vote16DC
29. Tionna Gay, Student, Black Swan Academy, Vote16DC
30. Tenlea Radack, Student
31. Karolina Tudman, Student, BASIS D.C.
32. Helisa Cruz, Student, BASIS D.C.
33. Mikayla Lee, Student, BASIS D.C.
34. Fiona Black, Student, BASIS D.C.
35. Ashari James, Student, BASIS D.C.
36. Taylor Keane, Student, BASIS D.C.
37. Nisa Quarles, Student, National Cathedral School
38. Molly Deegan, Student, National Cathedral School
39. Ciara Hargrove, Student, National Cathedral School
40. Lyla Bhalla-Ladd, Student, National Cathedral School
41. Alison Pierce, Student, National Cathedral School
42. Aaron Huertas, Public Witness
43. Angel Henriquez, Public Witness

44. Peter Orvetti, Public Witness
45. Alan Page, Public Witness
46. Scott Warren, Executive Director, Generation Citizen
47. Melissa Wyatt, Representative, Rock the Vote
48. Hannah Kohanzadeh, Policy Research & Development Assistant, DC Fiscal Policy Institute, Vote16DC
49. Bill Bystricky, President, Growing Democracy
50. Brian Conner, Outreach Coordinator, National Youth Rights Association
51. Alex Koroknay-Palicz, Board Member, National Youth Rights Association
52. Kaliah Smith, Public Witness
53. Anthony Samuel, Public Witness
54. Aliyah Matthews, Public Witness
55. Michael Place, Representative, Generation E Political Action Committee
56. Jessica Anderson, Public Witness
57. Anagea Dean, Public Witness
58. Robyn Lingo, Executive Director, Mikva Challenge DC, Vote16DC
59. Mary Beth Tinker, Representative, DC for Democracy
60. Daniel Hart, Professor of Psychology, Rutgers University
61. Abby Kiesa, Director of Impact, Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement
62. Christian Robles, Public Witness
63. Laura Fuchs, AP US Government Teacher, HD Woodson High School & WTU Executive Board Member
64. Abigail Koerner, Student, Harvard University
65. Calvin Jackson, Campaign Organizer, Vote16DC
66. Sterling Speirn, National Conference on Citizenship
67. Kadijah Wilson, Young Women's Project, Vote16DC
68. Derek Summerville, Public Witness
69. Vasu Abhiraman, Public Witness
70. David Cagua, Representative, March 4 Our Rights Campaign
71. Tony Donaldson, Jr., Ward 1 Community Advocate
72. Franco Ciammachilli, Public Witness
73. Samiya Lewis, Student, Amy Jacques Garvey Institute

ii. **Government Witness**

1. **Alice Miller, Executive Director, Board of Elections**

ATTACHMENT E

**Testimony to the Committee in the Judiciary and Public Safety on B22-0778 the
Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018**

Alik Schier

June 27, 2018

Good afternoon Chairman Allen. I am Alik Schier. 16 years old and I currently attend Woodrow Wilson High School. I live in Ward 1 of Washington DC, Mount Pleasant! I work as a host at Purple Patch and as a Kombucha server at the MTP farmers market. I am interested in politics and government. I am a member of the Hospitality academy at Wilson. I am also a peer educator at the Young Women's Project (YWP) and one of the youth leaders for the Vote 16 DC Coalition.

I am here today to testify in support of **Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018** which would reduce the eligible voting age to 16 years. During the past couple months I talked with media from The Washington Post, NBC Washington, WUSA9, Aplus, The Hoya, PBS, and NBC Nightly News about this bill

Let me start with why I support this legislation.

Politicians and elected officials make decisions, pass resolutions, and vote on policies that impact our lives every day. whether its funding for schools or public transportation, to jobs and affordable housing, healthcare, gentrification, and a host of many other issues that we care about. Education is one of the more important students care about. and it's because we are in schools for most of time during the year. With election day being last week, i saw so many flyers, literature, mailers, and even canvassers who argued why they were the best for DC public schools, or what they have done for education in the district. That is so important because we know what works in our school and what doesn't, By lowering the voting age to 16 you would be allowing the education system to be influenced by people who are actually impacted by it, makes sense right? If this bill passed it would be opening a door for 11,000 dc students to have a say in the policies or talks about our lives and our future?

16- and 17-year-olds drive cars with license plates that read "Taxation Without Representation," yet are still taxed and have no say in voting for representatives, The slogan mainly applies to voters now and how DC residents do not have a vote in the congress or the senate, yet 16 and 17 year olds are driving these cars too, and we don't even have a say in who is leading and representing us.

By lowering the voting age to 16, DC would be opening up the door to higher civic engagement at a younger age. Studies show that once you vote in your first election, you will continue that pattern for the rest of your life. When the voting age is lowered, government classes would be taught earlier and more civic engagement classes offered, creating a stable environment to start your voting habit. 16- and 17-year-olds make up one of the most active voting blocs in places where they are allowed to vote. Takoma Park, MD lowered its local voting age to 16 in 2013, and during that election season the percent of 16- and 17-year-olds who voted was four times higher than any other age group. Other countries like Brazil, Argentina, Austria, Scotland, and Germany have also lowered the voting age to 16, with successful results. My dad is somebody who doesn't vote in every election, i mean he didn't vote in the most recent primary, I know for one thing, i would bring him out to vote in every election because Young people know the issues as well, we know what affects us and our communities. and we get out to vote.

District politicians make decisions every day that impact our lives, schools, neighborhoods, and families, yet we can't even vote. Our taxes go into their paychecks, and they spend our tax dollars, yet we can't even vote. 16- and 17-year-olds make up one the most energetic voting blocs in places like Takoma Park and Scotland, yet we can't even vote. The time is now to give young people the keys to our future, we must lower the voting age to 16 in DC

Thank you for hearing my testimony. We look forward to continuing to work with you on this important piece of legislation.

VOTE 16 DC TESTIMONY

6/27/2018

Abubakr Uqdah

Good afternoon Council members. Today, I testify before you in support of lowering the voting age to 16 in the District of Columbia.

My name is Abubakr Uqdah, I am 17 years old born and raised in Washington DC. I am a proud homeschooler and member of the first-ever high school ACLU club.

Over the last 3 months, I have been working as a youth leader at the Vote 16 DC campaign.

I have come before the council, attended civics meetings and talked with many people about supporting the vote 16 act.

Surprisingly, the most common reason adults said they do not support lowering the voting age to 16 is that they "weren't smart enough" at 16 years old. Now, I can't comment on how smart you were at 16 but fortunately, there is no test to vote. The constitution does not say what IQ you must have, it does not require that you can read or even write to fill the circle on a ballot. Historically, some states tried to suppress voters by asking them to prove their intellect. That was unconstitutional. 16 year old should be able to vote regardless of their intellect.

On June 19, 2018, I registered and voted for the first time. It was quite easy. I gave the poll personnel my name, got my paper ballot, filled in the circle for the candidates that I wanted and took the ballot to the voting machine. That was far easier than the quadratic equations on an AP exam.

Mathematically, only 18 percent of the city's 479,723 registered voters casted ballots in this past primary.

I ask why such a low turn out?

The voting age was successfully lowered to age 16 in Takoma Park; Greenbelt, and Hyattsville, Maryland, and Berkeley, California. As a result of this, voter turn out was increased in all four areas.

Lowering the voting age in Washington DC is the first step to ensuring a future of voters with moral and ethical values; ultimately increasing voter turn out.

The age of 18 is a very stressful time in students lives. You are finishing high school and going to college soon, voting is the last thing that you are thinking about. 16 is the perfect age because students are getting the knowledge in school on how government works, therefore, making them a motivated voter.

A class assignment could be to register to vote. Students could get a hands-on experience in the classroom, all the way to the ballot box.

Also, did you know when a 16-year-old applies for a drivers license they are asked to make a decision to donate their organs without parental consent? If I can decide to donate my body parts I should be able to vote.

In closing, I would like to highlight the crucial fact that no United States Citizen can be prohibited from voting based on lack of knowledge or lack of experience. If that was the case, a very select group of people would be allowed to vote. In addition, no matter what one's beliefs are, everyone's vote should be valued and never questioned.

Thank you for the opportunity to come before you and to testify about this important matter. We hope to get your support of this potentially historic decision.

**Testimony to the Committee on the Judiciary
For the Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018**

**Tiffany Missembe
June 27, 2018**

Good afternoon, Councilmembers. My name is Tiffany Missembe and I am 16. I live in Ward 4 and I am a sophomore at Wilson Woodrow High School. I am a leader of the community service club, a Wilson theater player, and an honor roll scholar. This Spring, I was apart of "Black is..." which was Wilson's 1st all black play. I don't know exactly where i want to go to college yet but I know I want to major in law or Biology. I work as a peer educator at the Young Women's Project (YWP) and one of the youth leaders for the Vote 16 DC campaign.

I am here today to testify in support of the **Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018**. I am passionate about this bill because the youth in DC deserve a say in policies that affect them. Some people like me have immigrants for parents who don't have the right to vote. I want to be a voice for them but also for my neighbors and for the rest of my community.

Im very aware that our current public education system needs to reform. This year at my school only 60% of seniors graduated on time. This is because of the changes made to the attendance policy this year and students not being eager to learn. DCPS' attendance policy doesn't takes into account socio-economic barriers. The policy states that babysitting will be considered an unexcused absence. What if someone has to babysit to support their families? Does that not warrant an excused absence? Out of boundary students come to Wilson to have access to a better educational environment, but there constantly at risk of failing courses or being being expelled due to absences. The new attendance policy looks to me as a way to completely push out kids outside of boundary. What happened to "No child gets left behind"? Youth in wards 7 and 8 feel differently about that concept. I am a sophomore, Why am I doing the same work as a Senior at Eastern high school. Youth east of the river also don't get the same quality of education that is offered to students in Ward 3. If students had the right to vote we could organize around getting equal education.

I believe that this is not only a civic engagement issue but a racial injustice issue as well. The vast majority of youth in dc are from communities of color. As DC gets wealthier, wards east of the river continue to suffer with poverty and violence. According to *Curbed DC*, Ward 8 has the highest rate of violence, and the *Washington Post* has reported that Ward 8 has a child poverty rate of 49% compared to only 2.9% in Ward 3. However, in the Primary last Tuesday, only 7.7% of ward 8 voted, which was the lowest turnout in DC. By lowering the voting age to 16 you're giving more of a voice to the youth in DC, but also the black community especially those east of the river.

I believe the voting age should be lowered because the youth is heavily affected by policies implemented in our communities. We want to have a say but its hard when we don't have a vote. By allowing 16 and 17 year olds to vote their will be a positive spike in civic engagement that will bring a positive impact. I am one of the leaders on the Vote 16 DC campaign. Since April, 15 youth leaders from across the city have been meeting weekly to move this work forward. This opportunity has allowed me to connect with different youth around the city and hear about issues that I personally never had to face, As part of the work, I collected petitions with over 200 student signatures and received support from not only my parents, but my peers and also my teachers.

Thank you for hearing my testimony.

**Testimony to the Committee on the Judiciary For the Performance Oversight Hearing for
District of Columbia Public**

Elijah Robinson

June 25, 2018

Good afternoon Chairman Allen. My name is Elijah Robinson. I am 16 years old , I live in ward 7, I attend Cornerstone Schools of Washington, D.C. where I am a rising Senior. I am apart of the Student Council at my school, also I am a junior mentor at a non-profit organization by the name of Life Pieces to Masterpieces serving young African American males in wards 7 & 8. One thing that I enjoy doing is traveling. I am currently planning to study political science with a minor in accounting. I am also one of the youth leaders for the vote 16 DC Campaign.

I am here today to testify in support of Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018 which would lower the voting age to 16 years of age.

I wanted to Testify because young people should be free to voice their opinions, and be heard. We are young people who have thoughts and knowledge around issues and are unable to vote.

Voting at age 16 would be a phenomenal thing because we are mature and we are aware of the issues that concern society at large . We have just as much civil knowledge as an 18 year old on the issues that arise in the country. As a 16 year old, I not only go to school but also work and pay taxes. I should have a say on where my tax dollars are going. I believe, as I'm sure all of you do, in the phrase No Taxation Without Representation. I want to participate in our democracy.

We watch the news. We see the statements made about the youth or about our education system, when we have not been consulted. We have our plans on how we can better the situation. But we cannot vote.

One issue that I care about in my community is safety. Personally, I feel safe in my community because of the Life Pieces to Masterpieces program. Everyday, my younger brother and I get picked up from school and taken to Life Pieces, where I serve as a mentor for younger apprentices in the program. I also get dropped off home every day. There are so many young people in Wards 7 & 8 and throughout DC who could use

programs such as this, yet there are not enough programs for everyone. People who do not have safe places to go, or safe transportation to and from school, will have negative impacts on their lives and education.

With the right to vote, I will be a consistent voter in favor of more funding for after-school programs and mentorship programs. I will vote in favor of safe transportation for youth and for everyone. Thank you.

June 27th, 2018

Testimony of Timothy Male
Former Councilmember of the City of Takoma Park

Chairman Allen and members of the Committee,

Thank you for your leadership on introduction of Bill 22-0778, the Youth Vote Amendment Act.

I am here to testify before you today in support of passage of that bill, but specifically to summarize my experience as the author of a bill that lowered the voting age for municipal elections in the City of Takoma Park beginning in 2013. My city is a majority-minority community, with the highest density of affordable housing in Montgomery County and in which 1/3 of our businesses are owned and operated by immigrants. We have a reputation for liberal politics, but our residents dislike taxes and care about economic prosperity in the same ways that yours do.

In 2012, with the support of co-author Councilmember Seth Grimes and two other councilmembers, I introduced a legislative proposal to change our city charter to allow 16- and 17-year-olds to vote in city elections. Maryland's Constitution provides cities with broad authority to implement local elections, but we had no authority to adopt the change that you are also discussing – lowering the voting age for all elections.

During the debate on this proposal – which stretched across eight months and two public hearings – we heard what I expect you will hear during your discussions of the bill. We heard that teens were irresponsible voters. That they were ill-informed. That they would be unable to make logical decisions. That teens would vote in lockstep with their parents. We heard that they wouldn't vote. There are answers – including in peer reviewed research – that can help reassure you that the facts do not support these arguments against a 16-year-old voting age.

More objectionably, we heard that people didn't want to stand in voting lines with teens because of how they dressed. And that teens would 'dilute' the votes of existing voters.

But the most important thing that we heard by far, was a plea by well-informed articulate and diverse residents of our cities that they wanted to participate in our democracy as voters. They just happened to be 16- and 17-years-old at the time. And as a believer in democracy, I just don't know how you say 'no' to a resident who asks for that most fundamental privilege and right. We were a city whose election turnout mirrors that of cities around the country – elections where often 80-90 percent of all registered voters sit out the election. In that circumstance, how do you tell a constituent who wants to vote, whose taken civics, held a job and paid taxes that it would somehow be inappropriate for them to vote because of their age.

In Takoma Park, we adopted this change in time for our 2013 city council election – the first city in America to lower its voting age. And we now have the benefit of seeing what has happened through three general elections and one special election. I think its fair to say that the results have exceeded our expectations.

First, the turnout of 16-and 17-year-olds has topped that of older voters in each election. About 45% of registered teens have turned out while turnout of all voters was approximately 20%. The 2013 election did not prove to be a fluke. Teens have turned out at consistent high levels in each of our elections. In 2013, teen turnout was 400% higher than that of older voters.

Year	16-17-year-old turnout (%)	Citywide turnout, all voters (%)
2013	44%	10%
2015	45%	21%
2017	48%	22%

Although teen turnout has been higher than predicted, we did expect 16- and 17-year-olds to significantly outperform 18-25-year-olds in turnout. Why? If you look at research from Austria, Denmark and Scotland, which have all adopted or experimented with lower voting ages, they have found higher turnout by these teens. Those researchers have concluded that it's because most 16- and 17-year-olds are still at home, in a place with people they strongly identify with, and in which they are informed about the community in which they vote. In contrast, older teens have often left home for university or work and have little identification with the city or state in which they live, likely for a temporary period. In some of our elections there were more teens voting than all voters between the ages of 18-35 combined.

Other benefits in Takoma Park are harder to quantify but I will describe them. Since we made this change, teens have come to candidate debates. They testify at public meetings. They reach out to their elected officials to ask for services or assistance, often quite a bit more politely than older voters. We've also had teens organize Rock-the-Vote events. Teens have hosted and moderated candidate debates and participated in other ways that are inspiring. Our city now has a thriving Youth Council, offering expert opinion on the kinds of services and initiatives that would matter most to young people. This is critical feedback at a time when our demographics are more skewed than ever toward the oldest generations.

The change in our voting age also helped accomplish something that we had been trying to work on for a while – meaningful engagement with teens through which we in the City could honestly demonstrate that they mattered to us. This action helped significantly convey the message 'we are listening.'

And I believe our change in the voting age even created economic benefits – I continue to hear from residents who picked our city to move to from somewhere distant, because they have heard its such "a great place to raise kids... we even let them vote." All of us cities across the country compete to create a brand that attracts and retains residents – the voting age has helped us strengthen our brand as a great place to raise kids who will join and strengthen their community.

You may hear from residents who encourage you to hold a referendum on this issue rather than making the decision yourselves. I strongly discourage you from doing so, for the same reason that it was a mistake for cities and states across the country to use referenda in times past to extend voting rights to women and minorities. In many of those cases, voters chose against voting rights for women and minorities, including in Illinois during the Vietnam War when the state's voters voted against an 18-year-old voting age while the Constitutional Amendment was headed toward passage. If you must consider a referendum, become knowledgeable about this issue first and vote on a lower voting age and then use the referendum to ask residents if they want to take away the voting rights of their loved ones and neighbors.

I encourage you to move forward with this process and to vote for this legislation. If you have doubts, try this. Stand toe to toe, one-on-one, with one of the articulate and passionate teens that you will have the privilege to hear from today. Look them in the eyes and try to logically explain to them – as an elected representative of a democracy – why they should not be allowed to exercise its most fundamental right. I expect you will find it much easier to vote yet. To bring them into the ballot box, into representative democracy and into an even stronger position to positively shape your great city as they are doing in mine.



Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A

"Serving the Foggy Bottom and West End communities of Washington, D.C."

May 30, 2018

Councilmember Charles Allen
Chair, Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety
Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 110
Washington, DC 20004
callen@dccouncil.us

RE: DC Council Bill B22-0778 – the "Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018"

Dear Councilmember Allen,

At its regular meeting on May 16, 2018, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A ("ANC 2A" or "Commission") considered the above-referenced matter. With seven of seven commissioners present, a quorum at a duly-noticed public meeting, the Commission voted (5-2-0), after a motion made by Commissioner Harnett and seconded by Commissioner Campbell, to adopt the following resolution:

WHEREAS, a flourishing democracy ensures that everyone has the right and the power to make choices about the future of their communities and nation through the ballot box,

WHEREAS, student activism in the United States in response to the current political climate has been a reminder of the power young people have to bring about change,

WHEREAS, in the District of Columbia at 16 years old one may register for a driver's license, get a job, and pay taxes on their income,

WHEREAS, the DC Public Schools (DCPS) teaches civics to all high school students,

WHEREAS, students are significantly more likely to develop consistent voting patterns and become lifelong voters at 16 years old than at 18 years old due to their engagement in high school and lack of an intense transition when they turn 18 due to moving off to college, starting work, etc,

WHEREAS, an analysis published by the American Political Science Association (APSA) shows that about one of every nine parents who would have abstained from an election will vote after their children enter the electorate,

WHEREAS, in local U.S. elections that enabled 16 and 17-year-olds to vote, turnout was up to four times the rate for registered voters under 18 years old than it was for registered voters 18 and older,



Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A

"Serving the Foggy Bottom and West End communities of Washington, D.C."

WHEREAS, the DC Government and the Federal Government pass laws that have a direct impact on young people in the District, despite their lack of voting rights in selecting elected local, state, and federal representatives,

WHEREAS, to profoundly improve our primary education system, students should have the right to vote for educational leaders that will elevate their voices, and

WHEREAS, ANC 2A notes with deep concern the unconstitutionality of any test or arbitrary qualification established to evaluate whether any particular voter should be able to exercise their right to vote, and that the history of the United States has historically disenfranchised and denied the right to vote to people of color and women.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that ANC 2A supports the passage of DC Council Bill B22-0778 — the "Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018."

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that ANC 2A encourages the DC Public Schools to further integrate the practice of voting into the high school social studies curriculum, encouraging students to put what they learn about government in the classroom into practice.

Commissioner James Harnett (2A08@anc.dc.gov) is the Commission's representative in this matter and is authorized to give testimony on the basis of language contained in this resolution.

ON BEHALF OF THE COMMISSION.

Sincerely,

William Kennedy Smith, MD
Chairperson

CC: Brian Pick, Chief of Teaching and Learning, DC Public Schools
Scott Abbott, Director of Social Studies, DC Public Schools
Chairman Phil Mendelson
Councilmember Brianne Nadeau, Ward 1
Councilmember Jack Evans, Ward 2
Councilmember Mary Cheh, Ward 3
Councilmember Brandon Todd, Ward 4



Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A

"Serving the Foggy Bottom and West End communities of Washington, D.C."

Councilmember Kenyan McDuffie, Ward 5

Councilmember Vincent Gray, Ward 7

Councilmember Trayon White, Ward 8

Councilmember Anita Bonds, At-Large

Councilmember David Grosso, At-Large

Councilmember Elissa Silverman, At-Large

Councilmember Robert White, At-Large

Alana Intrieri, Director, Mayor's Office of Policy and Legislative Affairs

**Testimony to the Committee in the Judiciary and Public Safety on the Youth Vote
Amendment Act of 2018**

Jenny Gonzalez

June 26, 2018

I am here today to testify in support of the **Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018** which would reduce the eligible voting age to 16 years of age

Good afternoon Chairman Allen. My name is Jenny Gonzalez.

- I live in ward 1, in the Columbia Heights area and I'm a junior at Woodrow Wilson High School
- I plan on staying on the east coast for college to study genetic engineering. I'm a peer advocate at the Young Women's Project and because of them I am a part of the Vote16 coalition.

I am 16 year old who lives in Washington DC, yet I am not able to vote but there are many reasons why I am part of the Vote16 campaign.

Vote16DC was launched in the fall of 2017 through a collaboration between Generation Citizen, a national nonprofit that works to ensure that every student in the US receives an effective action civics education, and the Young Women's Project, a DC-based non-profit that builds the leadership and power of young people so that they can transform DC policies and institutions to expand rights and opportunities for DC youth. The past couple of months, we've been spreading awareness of the issue, we've gained even more support.

if we were able to vote, we would vote for politicians who would actually improve the school system since we the youth know it best, we know the strengths and weaknesses, we know what works best for us and what doesn't, we would be able to change it into a system that works best for everyone, fitting a better system for all students resulting in having a permanent effect, one that doesn't only lasts for ourselves, but for our siblings and future generations of students. A way we would make it better is by addressing the issue of how and why dcps high schools doesn't offer the same number of Advanced Placement classes in each school throughout the district. It's known that throughout the history of dcps high schools, the number of Advanced placement classes has been unevenly distributed in high schools. High Schools specifically in wards 6,7, and 8 receive way less advanced placement classes than schools compared to other schools. That means that the students in Advanced Placement classes, don't get the same chances of receiving a reasonable education like the students at Wilson, like me, where I have a variety of 29, 29 AP classes to choose from while Dunbar, Ballou, and Anacostia offer less than 14. This is a problem because it limits the amount of opportunities every student can get in order to learn and it isn't fair nor right.

Many people in the Latino community aren't able to vote due to status reasons, similarly to 16 year olds who aren't able to vote because of their age. I am part of the Latino community and I

am aware of the issues and of the unkept promises we hoped for. If 16 year olds were able to vote, we would vote for the issues we care about, along with the issues our community cares about. We would have a greater and united representation in the community because it's important to include everyone's voices. The youth are united, just like all other sorts of other communities. We are informed, through our peers teachers, social media, the news and because of that, we are actively engaged. The issues that are going on every day, does have an affect on us. So, because we are informed, we are actively engaged in civics and we care and you can see that in the Clean Dream Act march (DACA) that's occurred last November. It was blossomed through the youth, thousands of students walked out of their school to join the movement, or like the March for Our Lives as well had thousands of students who were involved.

Many people say that we are immature, that we're not ready and that us being able to vote is just absurd, and we can list all of our reasons why we are mature and we are ready, but on top of it all, science supports us. A thing to keep in mind is that the setting when voting is calm and by the time we're 16, the part of brain that's used to make decisions in a calm setting, our cold cognition, is already well-developed. Meaning that we are physically and mentally capable of voting. An example of this actually happened to me when I went to get my passport processed this past weekend, and after I filled out the application, I was asked to sign the application and raise my right hand to do the oath. I was confused because my 11 year old didn't have to complete the oath, but then i found out that because i was 16, i had to complete the oath and sign my own application.

Conclusion

There are many reasons why we hope this bill should be passed, because the we the youth are informed, we're aware of the issues that are going on today because we are the ones being effected and we're the ones who are involved. Vote16 is uniting teens from all over dc, who want the same thing in order to better the community not only for ourselves but for everyone else; to lower the voting age to 16.

**Testimony to the Committee in the Judiciary and Public Safety on B22-0778 the
Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018
QueSton Bell**

June 27, 2018

Good morning councilmember Allen My name is QueSton Bell and I am 17 Years old. I attend Cesar chavez pcs High school and I am going into my senior year. I am mentor at Life Pieces to Masterpieces NE and one of the youth leaders for vote 16 DC Campaign . I am here to speak on why 16 and 17 years olds should be able to vote in DC.

I support the Youth Amendment Act of 2018 because I believe that if I am being affected by different policies by legislators I should have the right to vote for them. This will create stronger government that appeals to the voices of more of its citizens. One of the promises of a democracy is representation of its citizens though popular sovereignty. I am member of this democracy yet I am not represented by my government. Throughout American history, suffrage has been denied to some of its citizen. But such is the beauty of a democracy, nothing is set in stone though diligence and perseverance this right has been granted to a majority of citizens, yet millions of 16 and 17 year old are not able to have that representation.

The members of the council have great opportunity to be the first major city to change that and empower DC youth. The same youth who were born and raised in this city who are aware of how their community has changed. As a black male who was born and raised in ward 5, who has seen H street changes and who has seen friends and family pushed out of their neighborhood due to gentrification. I feel that now more than ever

the youth of underserved community need to be able to represent themselves. The criminalization of black youth, education reform, access to healthcare-- these all affect us, and especially youth of color. Yet we cannot vote.

The US vote has power that other means of civic engagement, such as protesting or boycotting do not have . As we seen through the years youth have civically engaged through public protest ,and school walkouts. We are intelligent young people using impactful means to represent our voice but without the ability to vote our voices are muted. This is why we're asking for DC to lower the voting age to 16, thank you.

Testimony of Robyn Lingo
Executive Director of Mikva Challenge DC
To the DC City Council Committee on the Judiciary & Public Safety

Good afternoon Committee Chair Allen and other members of the Committee on the Judiciary & Public Safety, I am grateful for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Robyn Lingo and I am the Executive Director of Mikva Challenge DC.

Mikva Challenge DC is a non-partisan nonprofit whose mission is to develop youth to be informed, empowered, and active citizens and community leaders who will promote a just and equitable society. The cornerstone of our work is our belief that young people care about their world, that youth voice and participation matters, and that the best means of training young people for their roles as citizens and leaders – now and in the future – is to provide real opportunities to participate in authentic democratic activities. Founded in 1998, Mikva Challenge began as a small pilot program with an all-volunteer staff in four Chicago Schools; now 20 years later, Mikva has grown to serve over 15,000 students in Chicago, Washington, DC, and Los Angeles.

Mikva's innovative actions civics curriculum has been proven to develop active, life-long civic and professional leaders. Evaluation results demonstrate that students who participate in the Mikva program are:

- **Four times as likely to graduate from college;**
- **Almost twice as likely as other youth to be registered to vote;**
- **Twice as likely to volunteer time to address community issues;**
- **Five times as likely to run for office in their schools or communities; and**
- **Sixteen times as likely to volunteer on a political campaign.**

Through Mikva DC's Election in Action programs, students host their own candidate forums, serves as poll workers on Election Day and encourage peers and family members to register and vote, and serve as judges on Election Day. In 2016, Mikva DC students traveled to Iowa to volunteer on presidential campaigns before the Iowa Caucus, door knocked in Virginia before the state's primary, gathered to watch and discuss the presidential debates, and registered new voters. Last Election Day, over 100 Mikva DC students learned about our voting process first-hand by serving as poll workers at polling places across the city. This spring, in conjunction with DC Alliance of Youth Advocates (DCAYA) and Critical Exposure, students co-hosted a Youth-Led Mayoral Candidates Forum to provide students from across to DC with the opportunity to ask questions of the Mayoral candidates.

All of these experiences supporting DC youth prove to us, again and again, that young people care deeply about the issues facing their communities, and are uniquely capable of identifying and proposing solutions to these issues.

For these reasons, Mikva Challenge DC is in support of the "Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018" because we know that:

Research shows that voting is a habit and lowering the voting age to 16 will provide more time for our school systems to reach students at this critical age and encourage them to vote. Lowering the voting age to 16 is a great opportunity to further invest in high quality civic education. We have been so pleased and honored to work closely with DC Public Schools to incorporate our innovative action civics curriculum into their core standards for DC History and US Government classes. In partnership with DCPS Central Office and over 25+ public school teachers, we are providing opportunities for DC students to "learn democracy by doing democracy!" By providing 16-year-old students with the right to vote we are making this civic learning real, relevant and hands on. With Mikva DC's action civics programming, we can support teachers in providing innovative, project-based curriculum to help their students understand the voting process, the importance of voting, study and analyze the candidates and the issues and take informed positions as voters and civic leaders. If this initiative is passed, Mikva DC is ready and willing to support our city's teachers in preparing students to take on this new civic responsibility

And secondly, that lowering the voting age will ensure that youth voices and experiences are heard and valued by our elected leaders. At Mikva DC, we believe that if youth voice is included in decision-making, policy makers will make better decisions. Young people have important expertise to share with elected leaders about issues ranging from public schools, to transportation to and from school, to access to healthy food in their neighborhoods, safe and productive relationships with Metropolitan Police Department and many other issues that young people's lives in direct and meaningful ways. Every year, Mikva DC has over 1000 local students stand up on their "soapbox" and deliver passionate calls to action on important issues facing them and their communities. These speeches prove again and again that young people are engaged and invested in our city's policies and laws. Let's honor their already existing commitment to civic leadership by giving them the full rights of citizenship at 16.

Testimony , Bill 22-0778, "Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018, June 27, 2018.

Daniel Hart

Rutgers University

Good afternoon. My name is Daniel Hart. My professional role is distinguished professor of psychology at Rutgers University in Camden, New Jersey. I am the co-author with Jim Youniss of the recently published book, *Renewing Democracy in Young America* (Oxford University Press, 2017).

In our book, we consider the arguments for and against lowering the voting age, and review all of the social science research relevant to these arguments. Our conclusion is that the voting age should be lowered to age 16.

Here are the four reasons.

1. First. It's true that the brains of 16- and 17-year-olds are slightly immature relative to the brains of 25-year-olds. But these immaturities affect quickly made judgments, particularly those made in the presence of peers. This means that 16- and 17-year-olds may not make good judgments about whether to stop for a red light when driving with their friends. But voting is not this kind of judgment. People have plenty of time to think about their votes, and they always vote by themselves. The brains of 16- and 17-year-olds are fully mature for these kinds of decisions.
2. Second. 16- and 17-year-olds, but probably not younger teenagers, have the capabilities necessary to vote effectively. On national tests of civic knowledge, 16- and 17-year-olds know as much as 21-year-olds. They're as interested in politics as 20-year-olds. 16- and 17-year-olds are just as likely to have visited a public official in the past year as 21-year-olds. In a study done in Austria, 16- and 17-year-olds were found to be just as able as older adults to use their policy preferences to choose appropriate political candidates. All of these findings demonstrate that 16- and 17-year-olds are just as able to vote responsibly and effectively as are older people.
3. Third. Lowering the voting age will create more lifelong voters. International research suggests that lowering the voting age increases the percentage of young people who are interested in politics. We know that allowing 17-year-olds in the United States to preregister to vote increases the likelihood that young people will become regular voters. Austrian researchers have found that young people allowed to vote for the first time at age 16 are more likely to vote at age 18 than are young people eligible to vote for the first time at age 18. Lower the voting age and you will create more life long voters.
4. Finally, a fair society looks to increase political participation from those who can contribute. 16- and 17-year-olds have the knowledge and skills to contribute effectively to the governance of Washington D.C. By lowering the voting age to 16, and granting the right to vote to your fellow citizens who have the capabilities to do so effectively, Washington D.C. will be sending a national message that we want all qualified citizens to participate!

Testimony to the Committee in the Judiciary and Public Safety on B22-0778 the Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018

Monae Scott
June 27, 2018

Good morning Councilmember Allen. I am Monae Scott. I am 17. I am a rising senior at Seed public charter school. I live in Ward 7. I am also a peer educator at the Young Women's Project (YWP) and one of the youth leaders for the Vote 16 DC Coalition.

I am here today to speak on why 16 and 17 year olds should be able to vote. I support the **Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018** because it will give young people a voice and they can feel involved in the decisions that are being made that impact them. This is especially important for education. We know what is going on in the school and how problems can be fixed – especially the issues of attendance or classroom instruction. It is imperative that schools involve young people in how the curricula are set up. There should be more curricula for 11- and 12- graders that push them forward toward career choices. This is especially true for schools in wards 7 and 8. Teachers should have better relationships with students and find a way to help them to succeed. Teachers go based off of behavior and not what they students are actually capable of. That is one of the things that could change if youth get the vote and if young people were involved in making the decisions.

Another reason young people deserve the right to vote is because we are already contributing as leaders and activists. I went to the March for our Lives. I marched against gun violence in our schools and in our community. The DC students that came out realized that it could have been our school and they wanted to show support. We could be doing more on this issue. We march because we care about what is going on, we want change.

As a peer educator, I have seen groups of teenagers and young adults from the District area come together to talk about difficult health and life issues and we are able to spread that information with our peers and keep them in a safe mind set. Personally I've learned a lot that I've shared. I hear people say something and I say no that's not right. It raises awareness about things such as sex education and health, finances, and healthy relationships. It's another example of how young people are taking the initiative to make the community a better place.

Some people say that 16 and 17; year olds are not mature enough to vote. But I have a job. I pay taxes. I'm working to make my community better. If I had the vote, I would vote for politicians who care about the people in their ward and will actually make changes. Young people are good at spotting people that aren't 100% honest.

Conclusion

Finally, when young people start voting younger, they keep on voting. 18 is a difficult age to start voting because of the transition to college. It's hard for you to come home and vote. If young people start voting at 16, the process will be more supported and more accessible. It would be good for a class to be put in place so we can learn about whom we are voting for and what to look for in a candidate. It can even be an elective class.

Thank you for hearing my testimony. We look forward to continuing to work with you on this important bill that will grant us the right to vote in DC.

**Testimony to the Committee in the Judiciary and Public Safety on B22-0778 the Youth
Vote Amendment Act of 2018**

Chloe Ifill

June 27, 2018

Good afternoon Chairman Allen, I appreciate this opportunity to share my thoughts on lowering the voting age and the effect that our city has on me.

Hello my name is Chloe Ifill, I was born and raised in Washington D.C, I am 15 years old, (PAUSE) a sophomore at Woodrow Wilson high school, I work at the Young Women's Project, and I live in Ward 7. I am also one of the Vote16DC Youth Leaders.

After speaking to many of my peers and family I've realized how greatly the youth of our city are impacted by the rules and regulations set by our city's council members.

Overall I have collected signatures from many people in school both teachers and students and the majority of the people I met with were excited to hear that D.C's youth will finally have a bigger role in our city and have a say in the community they're living in. I support this legislation because:

- Currently the age to vote in dc is 18. Most people this age are on their way to college and don't usually vote. If this bill is passed, then the act of voting would become habitual for young people. Therefore voting at 16 would spark a consistent routine of voting.
- Education has had a great influence on my life. For as long as I could remember my family has reminded me of its importance and how lucky I am to have the opportunity to go to school. If I were able to vote I would vote for someone who could change the system for the better by making sure all DC public schools are on the same level academically. I have experienced the effect of the changes in the education system over the years first hand such as the lottery system that randomly places youth into schools all over DC and I was lucky enough to get into Murch for elementary and continue into Wilson High School. This has been a great opportunity for me; however, it came with challenges. I have to leave very early to get to school. This has taken away from my social life in school since I would be coming home late from any extracurricular activities

that I participate in and it would be dangerous for me to be neighborhood. This is why I have the hope that our city's council can truly improve our education, but with the help of those experiencing it first hand.

- I am very excited that DC is considering lowering the voting age, because by passing this bill, I would be one of the first 16 year-olds in DC history to vote and change our DC community for the better

Thank you for your time and I hope you will remember my personal story when making your decision.

**Testimony to the Committee on the Judiciary
For the Performance Oversight Hearing for District of Columbia Public Schools**

Lauryn Renford

June 27, 2018

Good afternoon Chairman Allen. I am Lauryn Renford, a 16 year old, incoming senior at Thurgood Marshall Academy in Ward 8. I live in Ward 5 of Washington DC. I work closely with the local chapter of Moms Demand Action on a mural project I am planning that will memorialize six of the many young people slain in the 2017-18 school year. Moms Demand Action is a leading organization in the fight for gun control around the country.

I am here to testify in support of **B21-0468 - Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018** which would lower the voting age to 16 years.

I want to share with the committee my involvement in the community. In the midst of our hosting of March 4 Our Lives, I met personally with Parkland youth at my school who have been paved the way with groundbreaking work. From this encounter we taught them how inner-city youth have been silenced on this issue for generations and specifically how everyday shootings do not warrant the undivided attention of local officials. 116 homicides took place in the city last year and my school was burdened with two of those this school year. Those two empty desks were a constant distraction to our own education. This act could have saved lives and spared my community and I from the weight of grief.

Shortly after the death of my boyfriend, Zaire Kelly, I sought out to plan a mural to serve as a space of remembrance and healing for the entire community. I was ignorant to the process of murals, so I began to take advantage of every resource I had, especially the local politicians who demanded a space on the stage of Zaire's celebration of life. My high expectations came crashing down as I was brushed off by the same elected officials who spoke to me about the character of my boyfriend. I was offered no help, or support from these people. The power to vote is imperative in cases like these. Elected officials who disregard the power of young people trying to defy odds and create positivity in a city, should not be elected officials.

Given, we are all residents of the District and know the fight for statehood all so well. While that fight makes progress everyday, statehood for the District is not promised. We have the chance now to expand representation in our city. Allowing 16 and 17 year olds to vote is more representation in itself. Washington, DC could also be the first major city to lower the voting age to 16, setting a standard as the nation's capital everyone should follow.

When 16 and 17 year olds are granted our right to vote, elected officials will have to listen and respect our voices and experiences as we stand on the frontline to every policy that is passed. If this very amendment was a year early, five 16 and 17 year old teenagers could have voted in the District to end the gun epidemic before that same epidemic ended their lives. We deserve a seat at the table.

Thank you Chairman Allen for allowing me to speak today.



**Hearing on B22-0778 the Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018
DC Council Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety
Councilmember Charles Allen, Chairman
June 27, 2018**

Testimony of Dave Chandrasekaran, Vote16DC Campaign Manager

Good afternoon Chairman Allen and other members of the Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety. I am pleased to testify today in support of the Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018. My name is Dave Chandrasekaran and I am the Campaign Manager for Vote16DC, which is a coalition of youth, adult allies, and organizations that support lowering the voting age in DC to 16.

As you are hearing from the youth here today, 16- and 17-year-olds are ready and able to become voters here in the District of Columbia. I have had the pleasure of working with the many Vote16DC Youth Leaders, and not only have they impressed me with their activism, but have taught me a lot on how to be a better member of my community. So I want to provide a perspective from an adult who strongly supports this proposal.

Why DC Should Lower the Voting Age to 16

I have been a DC resident for over 13 years, and for that entire time have worked on issues that impact lower-income families, communities of color, immigrants, and people at risk for violence and abuse. Unfortunately, DC youth are often the ones that are most affected by problems in our community, from educational inequality, to violence, to gentrification, to lack of job opportunities, to domestic abuse. But as we are seeing now, the country is finally recognizing the maturity, creativity, and power of young people when they are allowed to lead. And this is not just as a result of the amazing activism by the Parkland students; youth all over the country – and right here in DC have been mobilizing their peers to demand change for years. Adults – especially elected officials – just did not have much of an incentive to listen to them. Granting voting rights to 16- and 17-year-olds will encourage politicians to actually come and listen to youth, hear their concerns, and take concrete steps to improve their lives. Because if they do not, they would risk reprisal at the ballot box.

Another compelling reason is that youth work and pay taxes. DC Council and other elected officials get to dictate how these tax dollars are spent, yet youth do not get to vote on who these officials are. DC teens are therefore the real ones who are getting “taxed without representation.” So for those of us who have a strong commitment to getting voting rights for DC as a community, we must also recognize the need to do so for 16- and 17-year-olds in the District.

Also, it is important to consider the racial justice implications. As everyone knows, DC is changing. Despite major progress for some parts of the District, there are many segments of DC – especially in communities of color – that have been left behind. More affluent people are moving in, while long-time residents – mostly African Americans and other people of color – are getting pushed out. The majority of youth come from these communities, and so empowering them with the vote will hopefully prompt DC leaders to prioritize the needs of these residents and finally address the long-standing and growing inequalities. In this way, teens voting will not only encourage more attention on issues that affect teens, but also those that impact their siblings, their parents, their neighbors, and their communities at large.

Not Changing the Definition of Adulthood

One important item I want to address is the question of whether granting voting rights to 16-year-olds has an impact on other legal rights and responsibilities that are attached to certain ages. We have heard from a small minority of the community who wonder why we should let youth vote at 16 if we do not ask them to go to war, or would we now be allowing them to legally buy a gun? We want to be clear that our position is that this bill will *only* amend the age when people can vote in DC. It does not change the definition of an adult, nor does it impact any other section of the DC Code. We believe that DC – and the US in general – has a long history of recognizing that certain rights and responsibilities are appropriate for certain ages. Whether it is age 16 where you can drive, work longer hours, and is the age of consent in some states, to 18 when you are legally an adult, can enlist in military service or buy cigarettes, to age 21 when you can purchase and consume alcohol, to age 25 when you are able to rent a car without excessive fees. So I believe it is appropriate to lower the voting age to 16 without impacting any of these other considerations.

Youth Are Mature Enough to Vote

Another concern that is often voiced among skeptics is that teens are not mature enough to vote. I feel that the youth testifying today are showing very clearly that they are in fact more than mature enough to vote. But I also want to cite authorities in the field. I met with Dr. Ellen Middaugh, an Assistant Professor in Child and Adolescent Development at San José State University, who is an expert in youth development and civic engagement. She has spent the last 15 years examining adolescent and young adults' understanding of political issues and the factors that predict informed, effective civic and political engagement. She believes that "the research supports the idea that youth by age 16 are cognitively ready to vote and that allowing youth to vote at this age will support their long-term engagement in electoral politics."

Conclusion

For all of these reasons, the Vote16DC Campaign believes that DC youth are ready, DC youth are capable, and DC youth are deserving of being given the right to vote. If all goes well with this bill, I personally look forward to the 2020 elections, where I can be standing in line at the polls next to 16- and 17-year-olds from my community watching them make history by casting their first ballot. Thank you for this opportunity to testify, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

**Testimony to the Committee in the Judiciary and Public Safety on B22-0778 the
Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018**

Andrew Blickle

June 27, 2018

Good afternoon Chairman Allen, my name is Andrew Blickle and I am the Community Engagement Coordinator at Life Pieces To Masterpieces. I'm here to testify in support of the Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018 to lower the voting age to 16.

When our staff first heard about this movement, we decided to leave our involvement up to our young people. So we asked them, "Do you believe 16- and 17-year-olds should have the right to vote?" After some conversations around civics, politics, and community, the most common answer I heard was an enthusiastic yes! The second most common answer I heard, was "Yes, but it will never happen."

I don't hear that answer anymore, which is a testament to the work already done, by our youth and by the council. Not just in the support the bill is seeing, but also in how welcoming yourself and other City Council Members have been in allowing our youth into these spaces, watching them lead this campaign, and listening.

So, as we've been listening, what have our young people had to say? First and foremost, we know they care about our education system. I work inside a DCPS School, I have had an internship at the DCPS Central Office, and I regularly communicate with parents, teachers and staff at different DCPS schools, charter schools, and community partners. What I can say, unequivocally, is that our high school students understand the challenges facing our education system as well, if not more, than anyone else in this city. They truly are experts. From safe passage and attendance policies, to inequities across the district, they care about the same issues we care about, and they understand these issues at an even deeper level than we do.

It doesn't stop at education. They are experts in their own lives. Many have seen their friends move away from them as rents have risen. They know how

much easier it is to find a 4 for 4 from Wendy's than fresh produce. They know, very well, which areas and neighborhoods are safe for them to be in, and which are not, and they know how to navigate social pressures, societal beliefs about who they are and are not, and institutions that historically have not been there to support them.

Listening to our young people, together, we can make history in these next few months. It is only a matter of time before we recognize that people old enough to pay taxes, people who organize and better their communities, people who understand civics and vote – when able – at a higher rate than any other age block, deserve that right to vote. So, let's be the first major city to get this done, and stay true to our belief in "No Taxation Without Representation." Let's make DC the city with the highest voter turnout in the country, and let's make DC a city that listens to our experts – our young people – on how to improve our education system.

Thank you for listening to me, and, especially, for listening to our young people.

Testimony to the Committee in the Judiciary and Public Safety on the Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018

David Adams

June 27, 2018

Good Afternoon Chairman Allen, my name is David Adams. I am a 14-year old living in Ward 7 of Washington, D.C., and I am an upcoming sophomore at McKinley Technology High School. I aspire to get accepted into the Massachusetts Institute of Technology so that I can major in electrical engineering and become an electrical engineer. I am also a Junior Mentor at Lifepieces to Masterpieces and a youth leader for the Vote 16 DC Coalition.

I am here today to testify in support of the Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018 which would reduce the eligible voting age to 16 years of age.

I want 16 year olds to have the right to vote because I believe that this is our future and our lives that we're voting for and we should have a voice in what rules and laws are implemented into our ways of life.

One issue that I believe is overlooked is that there is not enough funding for STEM programs in schools. I live near Capitol Heights and I have to take two trains to get to McKinley Technology High School. My neighborhood school is H.D. Woodson, a conveniently close High School that is about a 2 minute walk down the street from my house. Because of my career goals, however, I cannot receive that education in my neighborhood. If 16-year olds had the right to vote then we could address this issue and work towards gaining funds for our neighborhood schools, especially in Wards 7 & 8, which lacks any high-performing public schools.

Another issue I would like to address is the school suspension policy. Schools suspend students for their negative behavior and actions, but, does suspending the students help them? When students get suspended, they are temporarily banned from their school, which is a place not only for education but a place for kids to go during the day. When kids are suspended, they do not have a designated location to be, allowing them to stay home or be in the streets. The suspended teenagers on the streets in their neighborhoods and can be influenced negatively due to peer pressure and the images and violence present within their communities. This is the *School to Prison Pipeline*. Due to the exposure and influences they may face while out of school such as drugs, guns, drinking and smoking, they are also more likely to be incarcerated than their unsuspended peers. With this right to vote, 16-year olds can vote in favor of more progressive discipline in schools. This isn't just a personal issue for me, as I have never been suspended from any of my schools, but I know fellow students of mine that have been suspended.

Education isn't the only issue that matters to me, as I care about safety in my community and also safe, affordable housing and transportation. But as a student, I am an expert in our education system. Since our mayor and our city council have such a role to play in the education we receive, we need a say in the policies that are affecting our lives. It is our present and our future that we are voting for.

**Testimony to the Committee in the Judiciary and Public Safety on B22-0778 the
Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018
Michael Olugbuyi**

June 27, 2018

Good afternoon Chairman Allen. I am Michael Olugbuyi. I am 17 years old and will be a freshman at The Pennsylvania State University this fall. I live in Ward 5 of Washington DC in the neighborhood of Brookland. I plan on studying finance while in school. I also intern at a non profit called Life Pieces to Masterpieces located right here in Washington DC. It was through life pieces that I got involved in this phenomenal movement that hopefully will change the way that we vote in Washington.

I am here today to testify in support of the Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018 which would lower the voting age to 16.

I want to testify because I believe that more people should be able to voice their opinions and have an actual impact on what happens in their lives. There are young people all across DC who have ideas, first hand knowledge and experiences on issues impacting our communities yet are unable to vote.

I have attended high school in Ward 3 and Ward 7, which has shown me two things. First, there are disparities in our education system that need to be fixed. The education you can receive in Ward 7 unfortunately does not compare to that in Ward 3. Second, young people from every corner of this city care about their communities and want to see them improve. We are the experts of our own lives and want a voice into how our lives are being affected by government policies.

We are just as informed and passionate about this as the adults who also live in Washington. Teenagers living in DC have some major responsibilities, and are mature enough to make informed decisions that impact our lives. We are just as capable and just as committed to the responsibility of voting that any adult living in Washington has.

We recognize the disparities in the school system, the issues facing our school system but I know the resilience of the students and the abilities of all people in Washington D.C. ages 16 and 17 to handle the responsibilities of voting.

Thank you for hearing my testimony. We look forward to continuing to work with you on this historic piece of legislation.

Testimony to the Committee in the Judiciary and Public Safety on B22-0778 the Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018

Micah Carter

April 14, 2016

Good afternoon. My name is Micah Carter. I am a 16 year old Washingtonian, I live in Ward 7 with my mom. I am a rising junior at Woodrow Wilson senior high school. I plan to go to Spelman college or Temple University and study business and finance. I am a active resident in neighborhoods throughout the city. My family has been in the city for 5 generations we have planted deep roots all throughout the district. I currently am an intern for the Holistic Planning Network. I am also a peer advocate at the Young Women's Project and one of the youth leaders for the Vote 16 DC Campaign.

I am here today to testify in support of **Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2017** which would lower the voting age to 16 years of age

I also wanted to share with the Committee all of the work that has already been accomplished to support this legislation and to bring young people into the electoral process. During the past couple months I have spent my time working for the Young Women's Project I am a youth advocate so I spend a lot of time with youth.

I support this legislation for many reasons

Reason 1. I am a strong advocate for education and equity. I live in ward 7 and I attend Woodrow Wilson Senior High School which is a Ward 3 school. My neighborhood school is H.D. Woodson high school which unfortunately does not promote my growth as a scholar. I travel a minimum of 45 minutes everyday to school through public transportation to get to school. It seems to be that the schools east of the river lack funding and they are affected the most by the several problems concerning the DCPS system. They do not have as as many opportunities that schools like Wilson, Walls.

Reason 2. It impacts me because I would get a say about my education, health care, the things that happen in my community. I am a strong proponent of proper representation and I would say all of the people in this room are to. The youth of this city which are considered to be all people under 24 are the future, the people who live and build this city everyday. We are the people who constantly have to suffer the consequences of the decisions made by people who don't live our everyday lives. Passing this legislation would mean that the city is taking a step forward in terms of equity. Many youth pay taxes, work, are caregivers, go to school, and juggle so much to survive everyday life.

Reason 3. Also I am a strong advocate for having say to where our money goes. Personally I feel as though many youth programs, schools, arts/music programs suffer because of insufficient funding. If this legislation is passed for the youth of this city it would only be beneficial for the city. More than half of the homicide victims this year have been youth. The funding made by laws made by people who are not the youth of this city

Conclusion

Thank you for hearing my testimony. I hope that we can all come together and help this city into a age of progression.

**Testimony to the Committee on the Judiciary
For the Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018**

**Marcia Huff, Director of Youth Poverty Programs
Young Women's Project**

June 27, 2018

Good afternoon Chairman Allen and members of the Committee on the Judiciary. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am Marcia Huff, Program Director of the Young Women's Project (YWP). YWP builds the leadership and power of young people so that they can transform DC institutions to expand rights and opportunities for DC youth. *Since 1994, YWP has developed thousands of youth leaders and has worked in partnership with a number of DC agencies to develop policy and implement programs in sexual health education and services, foster care rights and opportunities, youth employment, and other issues.*

YWP programs engage under-resourced youth of color, ages 14-24, with a focus on teen women, youth in foster care, and homeless youth. Our work takes shape through two main program areas. The Youth Poverty Program (YPP) builds the power and leadership of system-identified and homeless youth. As part of this work, the Center for Youth Adults (CYA) engages 100 emancipating youth in a continuum of interventions and services including capacity building training, peer support groups, jobs, individual coaching, connections to community resources, financial support, and jobs. The Peer Health and Sexuality Education Project (PHASE) engages DC youth as peer educators and advocates who work to improve health outcomes and reduce unplanned pregnancy, expand comprehensive sexuality education, and increase access to health care for youth, working in partnership with DC Public Schools and the Department of Health (DOH). We hired more than 200 peer educators last year that reached more than 7,000 youth with sexual health education, condoms, and clinic referrals.

I am here today to support the Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018. Thank you for introducing this legislation and engaging young people as partners in moving it forward. The legislation has generated a lot of excitement among our youth staff who started mobilizing their peers in 2016 when the bill was first introduced. We are pleased to be a co-leader with Generation Citizen of the Vote 16DC Coalition, a city-wide partnership of youth, adult allies, and organizations that believes that DC should grant voting rights to 16- and 17-year-olds in the District. Since April, youth leaders have been meeting twice a week, working out of our two offices located in Ward 1 and Ward 7. They've mobilized hundreds of their peers to support the Act, completed dozens of interviews for local and national media, educated elected officials, and engaged Coalition members. Coalition members include ACLU DMV, High School Youth Union, Amara Legal Center, Break the Cycle, Critical Exposure, DC Action for Children, DC Alliance of Youth Advocates, DC Fiscal Policy Institute, For the Love of Children, Latin American Youth Center, Life Pieces to Masterpieces, Mikva Challenge DC, Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless, Whitman Walker Health, and the YMCA DC Youth & Government.

As an organization dedicated to building youth power, who has worked in partnership with DC youth for 24 years to expand rights and opportunities -- there is a long list of reasons why we support this legislation. I will give you the top four.

First. In the past six years, I've worked side by side with hundreds of youth -- including 15, 16, 17 year olds -- who were eager to improve their own lives and equally dedicated to helping their peers. I've seen their

dedication, focus, intelligence, determination, and altruism. I've seen them work one and even two jobs while going to school, caring for siblings and elderly relatives, contributing to the family income, and navigating complex education and social service systems. I've seen them maneuver in a political system that did not formally recognize them-- in order to pass laws and policies that would improve their own lives. Most of our young people did not even benefit from the laws that they worked to pass. These policies include:

- New DC State Learning Standards for Health Education
- The Foster Youth Transit Subsidy
- The Foster Youth Rights and Responsibilities Amendment Act of 2013
- Expanded opportunities as peer educators and condom distributors in public schools
- Increases in allowance and independent living subsidies for youth in care
- Increased access to DPR sites for older youth
- Increased year round employment opportunities for DC youth
- Increased supports available to youth who emancipate from foster care
- Improved public education through expanded community schools, school lunch, academic equity, and expanded mental health services in schools

None of these policies would have been passed without the political engagement of 16 and 17 year olds. The work we do at YWP is stronger, more effective, and more relevant because we do it in partnership. We could not do this work alone as adults.

Second. Working side-by-side youth and elected officials taught us that our leaders are at their best when they listen to youth and work with them to solve problems. Youth partners bring a whole different game into the political arena. They are not beholden to the status quo and conditioned to compromise. They have high expectations for their own lives, the institutions that support them, and their political leaders. They ask tough questions. They call BS when they see it. They are relentless. We as adults have a lot to learn from them as partners.

Third. As a city, there are a lot of problems that need attention -- and many of them involve youth: improving public education, reducing the youth homicide rate, increasing youth employment, reducing teen pregnancy, improving outcomes for system-identified youth. As a city, we spend millions of dollars on your programs services and public education. And we are not succeeding -- yet. Understanding these problems and moving toward solutions requires youth engagement, youth assessment and adult youth partnership. Youth deserve the opportunity to weight in on the issues that impact their lives.

Finally, we should pass this legislation because brings us closer to living the values that we hold so dear in the District of Columbia -- inclusion, opportunity, and equity. We will strengthen our democracy by engaging youth voters. 16 and 17 year olds have demonstrated responsibility, commitment, and a willingness to embrace full citizenship. It's time for us to demonstrate our commitment to them.

Thank you for hearing my testimony and for your leadership on this issue. We look forward to continuing to work with you on this issue.

Testimony in support of "Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018"
Brandon Klugman, Generation Citizen
June 27, 2018

Good afternoon, Committee Chair Allen and Members of the City Council Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety. I'm grateful for the opportunity to speak with you today.

My name is Brandon Klugman and I lead Vote16USA, an initiative of Generation Citizen, a national education non-profit dedicated to empowering young people to be informed and engaged citizens through promoting action civics education and youth voice, which includes supporting youth-led work to lower the voting age to 16.

We have been privileged to work for the past year plus with you, youth leaders from across the city, and local community organizations that make up the Vote16DC coalition, to bring this bill to life. I could not be more excited to be in this room today, surrounded by more than 70 passionate young people and adult allies who have come to voice their support.

Extending voting rights to 16- and 17-year-olds is a bold, smart move that will strengthen democracy on the local level here in DC for years to come. As my colleagues will explain in greater detail, research shows that voting is a habit. If you vote in the first election you're eligible for, you're quite likely to continue participating as a habitual voter for years to come. If you do not vote in that first election, you're much more likely to continue sitting on the sidelines as a habitual non-voter for the next several years. Unfortunately, age 18, when many are in the midst of major life transitions, is not a good time to start that voting habit. At 16, on the other hand, young people are in a much better position to take advantage of their first opportunity to vote, establishing a lifelong habit of civic participation. Data from the cities in the US and the countries around the world that allow 16 and 17 year olds to vote shows this is true. Consistently, 16- and 17-year-olds have turned out at greater rates than older age groups, and have always outperformed traditional first time voters — those ages 18-20 -- at the polls.

The DC Board of Elections already pre-registers 16- and 17-year-olds to vote, a policy that has been proven to increase turnout among young voters. This bill is a natural next step to build on this momentum and ensure that young people in the District become lifelong voters.

In addition, extending voting rights to 16- and 17-year olds will strengthen civic learning in schools. We know that students learn best when they can put what they're learning into action, when class material is relevant to their lives. There is no better way to do this for civics than by inviting students into the voting booth.

And of course, as so many students have powerfully remarked, passing this bill will ensure that 16- and 17-year-olds' voices are heard and concerns are addressed in the local policymaking process.

About three years ago, right around the time the Youth Vote Amendment Act was first introduced, we launched Vote16USA to help support and coordinate work to lower the voting age in cities and states across the country. Not everybody took it seriously, to say the least. Councilmember Allen has often referred to the same reaction to his 2015 version of this bill.

I think it is safe to say that things have changed. The folks in this room are proof of that.

We all know that bold solutions are needed to strengthen our democracy, especially on the local level. Only 17.6 percent of registered voters turned out for DC's recent primary elections. That is not enough. Many major cities around the country do even worse. Passing this legislation is one bold solution that can help reverse the trend.

Young people have shown that they care deeply about local issues and they are eager to lean in, to engage in the local political process. That is a good thing, and it's time we embrace it by extending voting rights to 16 and 17 year olds. Thank you, Chairman Allen, for your leadership. We encourage all members of this committee to support the bill, and are grateful for the opportunity to stand among such a strong, diverse coalition of youth, adults, and community organizations in saying so.

Thank you for your consideration.

**Testimony to the Committee in the Judiciary and Public Safety on B22-0778 the
Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018**

Ceon Dubois

June 27, 2018

Hello my name is Ceon Dubois. I am 16 and I attend Idea High School. I live in ward 7.
I am a youth leader of the black swan academy.

I support the Vote Amendment Act of 2018 because with us being able to vote at 16 we will be able to voice our opinions, and concerns on what's going on in our community and schools. we will also be able to voice that needs of our schools better than a adult can.

Growing up I was told that i am too young and I don't know what im talking about, but i have a lot knowledge and experience politically organizing. I've talked to many council members, I also testified in hearings, participated in candidate forums, and led community service events. Voting is habitual, and 16 is a much better time than 18 to establish the habit of voting. At 18, people are in a state of transition that makes it less likely they will vote. At 16, young people can establish the habit of voting in a more stable environment, supported by family, peer, and teachers. I will continue leading in my community and I know that the ability to vote will help me make the changes that need to be made.

**Testimony to the Committee in the Judiciary and Public Safety on B22-0778 the
Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018
Tionna Gay**

June 27, 2018

Good afternoon chairman Allen. My name is Tionna Gay and I am 14 years old. I live in ward 8 and I go to Anacostia High School. I am a youth leader at Black swan, where we talk about issues in our schools and in the city. After I graduate high school I want to pursue a career in the arts, specifically interior design, fine art or culinary art.

I am here to testify in support of the Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018.

Young people do not have a say in things. People feel that it is the adult's choice to speak out. When young people try to express their opinions on topics happening, adults shoot them down. There could be more impactful results for people in the office if youth could vote. By allowing 16 and 17 years to vote we could have a say in who is elected in office.

The next election will be in two years, since I am 14 I will be able to vote in it. When this bill is passed I will have a say in what is going on in the city and the country I live in. this important because I can say I helped to choose someone who could give this city good outcomes.

We sat down with David Grosso to talk about how strict the school dress code was. We pushed to not have students suspended for not following dress code. My peers also talked about sexual harassment and the lack of school supplies such as outdated textbooks or no calculators. If I had the opportunity to vote, I would engage in politics more. I would be more involved in the community. I know that when I go on to high school, I want the issues to be fixed. Also, I have younger cousins who will go to school to have a better educational experiences. I learned that there are more male teachers than women teachers.

I have older siblings who graduated. My older sister told me about certain things in school that were unfair. She would be left out of certain things, whereas other youth would have more opportunities. My brother felt that school would fun, however, his experience was the opposite. He would express that many teachers did not care about the students. If 16 and 17 year olds had the opportunity to vote we could have a say in better and more representative teachers

If I could vote I could organize with friends to introduce and vote on better textbooks. We can work on sexual harassment issues and vote on meaningful policy change. My brother can talk to the school board and council about ineffective teachers and that would mean something because we can actually vote.

**Testimony to the Committee in the Judiciary and Public Safety on B22-0778 the Youth
Vote Amendment Act of 2018**

**Tenlea Radack
June 27, 2018**

Good afternoon Chairman Allen.

My name is Tenlea Radack and I am 14 years old and I live in ward 3. I attend Woodrow Wilson High school and I am a rising sophomore. I am one of the youth leaders for the Vote 16 DC Coalition and I am here to speak on why 16 and 17 year olds should be able to vote. I support **the Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018** because I believe 16 and 17 years olds are completely capable of making sound decision about the changes they want in their city. I occasionally see city campaigns on the side of the street or on the bus, but no one has ever directly asked me about my opinions of what I think should happen in DC. Young people, like the students of Wilson, see the problems and take action by ourselves, if possible. There is this idea proposed by DCPS about a schedule for years to come. It is called a 4 by 4. The schedule was proposed to assure that less students fail overall, but what we, the students, know is that this would makes classes increasingly difficult and it would put an enormous strain on AP testing. The 4 by 4 schedule would be the same 4 classes everyday, 80 minutes each, for a semester, then switch to completely different classes. This would not only disrupt AP tests, but also diminish skills like math and English because, for the majority of the calendar year, we would not take those classes. Students knew instantly that it was a bad idea and we started a petition. When talking about this petition in one of my classes, one of my teachers told me that if we really wanted to prevent the new schedule, our parents needed to say something, not us.

Even though this issue does not speak directly about the decisions of the city council, it is a similar instance where we know what is best for us, but our opinions are not listened to. Thankfully, the 4 by 4 schedule is not happening this year, but it is proposed for the following year, and since our voices don't have a say in what happens, we can't effectively advocate for ourselves. There are issues the city council addresses that have a effect on us. As some of you might be aware, there is overcrowding at my school and several other schools, along with many physical things that need repair. In fact, I can't remember the last time I entered a school bathroom that didn't have one aspect of it broken. A majority of my teachers this year had to continuously switch rooms because there were not enough available for them. These issues relate to school funding, and it is a daily aspect of our lives. We have opinions that deserve to be heard and considered. That is why I support the ability for 16 and 17 years olds to vote. That is why I support **the Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018**.

Thank you for your time.

Helisa Cruz
Helisaeliana@gmail.com
Judiciary Committee
Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018

Good afternoon, Chairman Allen, and members of the Judiciary and Public Safety Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of B22-0778, the "*Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018*". My name is Helisa Cruz, I am a 16-year-old Ward 5 resident. This fall I will enter the 11th grade at BASIS DC Public Charter School, where I have been enrolled for ~~two~~^{six} years.

I am civically engaged in my community regularly by advocating on behalf of myself and my peers here at the Wilson building and marching with like-minded individuals at various protests on issues that matter to me. Next school year 2018-2019, I am starting an ACLU club at my school, where I hope to encourage my peers to be civically involved in politics on a local and federal level.

As a very politically engaged 16-year-old latina, there are various pieces of legislation that pass daily on the federal and local level that both affect and concern my generation.

In 2020, I will turn 18 and will finally be able to vote, but imagine if I could have voted in the democratic primary. My one vote along with those of my peers, we would have made a serious impact in the results.

I am in support of the Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018" because I want to ensure that my friends and peers have an opportunity to exercise their civic duty and vote NOW! There are some nay sayers who's argument implies that 16 year olds are not mature enough to cast a vote.

However, 16 year olds are given the option to obtain a permit or license to drive, in addition to paying taxes. Other arguments entertain the idea that 16 year olds are not prepared with critical thinking skills to make rational decisions. I beg to differ – this 16-year-old is ready, willing, and able.

Sixteen year olds can be criminally charged as an adult and we should be able to cast a vote – like an adult. Imagine a world where 16 and 17 year olds use their voices by voting. There are pressing issues that face my generation today, such as gun violence, homelessness, and issues surrounding our education system here in DC. I should be able to vote legislators in office who advocate for me and

my community with our best interest in mind, just as I should have the power to vote them out.

I want to vote now – please don't silence us, by opposing the Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018.

Nisa Quarles

June 27, 2018

Testimony

Good afternoon. My name is Nisa Quarles and I am a rising sophomore at the National Cathedral School. Before I begin, I would like to thank Councilmember Allen and the rest of the Council for allowing me this opportunity to come before you all today. The central purpose of voting is to give civilians an opportunity to express their opinions and concerns about what they want from their elected officials. Therefore, using similar logic to that which was used for the ratification of the twenty-sixth amendment, those who are affected by the policies should have the opportunity to vote on them. Although a lot of policies impact all minors, beginning at sixteen years old, people are able to understand and develop logical opinions on them. Government officials believe that sixteen and seventeen year olds are capable enough to work, pay taxes, and drive. All of these tasks involve critical decision-making skills and driving specifically requires the driver to take responsibility for their own life and the lives of those with whom they share the road. Yet, new drivers are still deemed not competent enough to stand behind a booth and cast a vote. Additionally, in my generation of social media, we are more aware of the political scene and political issues than our parents were. Even though I may open my phone to read a text message or check a social media app, I am bombarded with news alerts and hashtags about the latest school shooting, sexual assault allegation, natural disaster, or Trump tweet. They are unavoidable. Unfortunately, though we may have the "world at our fingertips," we have no real say in how it operates. Thirdly, by the time a lot of people have the opportunity to vote, they are away from home and most likely in college. At sixteen and

seventeen, however, people are under the guidance and influence of their guardians and educators where the importance of their civic responsibility to vote can be instilled in them when they participate in their first election. This not only allows for people to be more inclined to continue this habit into adulthood, but it also encourages parents to vote in order to set standards for their children. Lastly, if the argument is that sixteen and seventeen year olds lack the life experience necessary to vote, I will say this in response: My parents have never experienced a lock down drill in the middle of class to prepare for an active shooter or looked around the room for the nearest exit "just in case." It is difficult to make a reckless decision on a ballot when it's a matter of life and death. We cannot be the future and change the world if we do not have a say in what it will be. Thank you.

Molly Deegan

6/27/18

Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018 Testimony

Hi. My name is Molly Deegan, I am 14 years old, I attend the National Cathedral School, and I have lived in DC my entire life.

What does it mean to be a teenager? Not long ago, it meant to sit through classes all day, experience social pressure, grow both physically and mentally, and be told about your future constantly. But, while all of this is still very true, there is a new definition of being a teenager. Now, to be a teenage is to often fear your life at school, or check the news only to see another school shooting. And being female teenager is to wonder if you get pregnant, will you have a say in your body and your life. To be a teenager is to hope the adults around you will represent you with their vote.

I only recently turned 14 but I take time everyday to read the newspaper and listen to various news stations. Through discussions with my peers, I have noticed we all see an opportunity for change. Whether it been in immigration, abortion, gun control, or simply a school policy. I will say we are quite an opinionated generation. No matter our position on a topic, we have a fire within us to fight for what we believe in.

America is crazy today. It is hard to only know two administrations in my lifetime, Obama and Trump. And to see how quickly our political field can change with one

president. This past election, I spent many nights frustrated and talking to my parents. I felt powerless with no voice in my own community. And I know many of my peers shared my frustration. This sparked conversations about we would do if we were able to vote. I just wanted to have a voice to help those around me and protect my rights for years to come. I hope that to be a teenager soon will not only include the right to vote, but the ability to be a voice for the voiceless. Thank you and I hope to vote alongside you in 2020.

Ciara Hargrove

June 27, 2018

Good Afternoon. My name is Ciara Hargrove. I am 16 years old. I attend National Cathedral School in Ward 3, and I have lived in the Fort Totten neighborhood in Ward 5 my entire life. As anyone can guess DC is one of the most politically active cities in the country for this city is at the center of most political discussions. The executive, legislative, and judiciary branches of government are all centered at the heart of this wonderful city and have impacted the political involvement of citizens who live in DC and surrounding counties and cities in Maryland and Virginia.

Yet, despite being the way DC is, it doesn't have enough representation when it comes to the youth being engaged in voting and other government decisions. As statistics show, Washington DC had the highest percentage of electorates who voted in the 2012 presidential election, the second highest percentage of registered voters in the 2012 presidential election, and the highest total political contribution per adult population. Yet when the statistics displayed the percentage of citizen voters by age group, Washington DC was not applicable due to the fact that "the base was less than 75,000 and therefore too small to show the derived measure" (Wallet Hub).

It disheartens me as a high school student to see so little representation from my cohort in such a political city like Washington. There is so much political engagement that many students including myself are apart of and our voices should be heard. Classes such as American Government, US History, US Politics, and clubs such as current events club, government club, student government, debate club, and countless of others focus

and broaden the ability for students to be politically active in schools. News sites such as The New York Times, CNN, FOX, NBC, NPR, Huffington Posts, Now This, which focuses on current events, Stay Tuned from NBC, National Geographic, the Washington Post, News Corp AU, The Telegraph are easily accessed on social media sites such as Snap chat, Instagram, Facebook, or just looking at the internet that we as the youth use to expand our knowledge and have access to literally at a push of a button.

I know there are concerns that if lowering the voting age to 16, are 16 and 17 year old students responsible enough to have that power. It's valid to an extent to question the maturity of the age group and I would first bring up the fact that if students are allowed to drive on the roads of the city then why wouldn't be able to vote for who they want to represent them. Moreover by lowering the voting age to 16, it would intrigue the minds of students to become more politically invested, involved, and active so they are aware of the current events going on and the policies of the members they will be voting for.

The political fire that burns inside the youth when it comes to topics that effect our society is intense, blazing, and fierce. As you look into history the amount of students who have gone out and expressed their valid and deserving opinions in order to bring change is extraordinary and inspiring. During the Civil Rights Movement groups such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee were influential and instrumental in the process of, "desegregated schools in the Jim Crow South, challenged racism during Freedom Rides, and pushed forward voter rights and civil rights legislation" (National Geographic). In the 1960's many students and student groups such as Students for a Democratic Society conducted protests against the Vietnam War in response to the two million men young men drafted (National Geographic). And in this current year the brave

students of Marjory Douglas High School organized March For Our Lives, the largest protest in DC's history with numbers around 800,000 citizens attending to support this powerful movement (USA Today). Which brings us here today, to the students in this room testifying and the movement for 16 year olds being able to vote in DC today. Our voices matter. Although it's a whole arrange of voices from all different parties, and different backgrounds it still matters. The youth needs the representation it deserves and lowering the age to 16 years of age is in the right direction for it being given. Thank you so much for listening to my testimony today.

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Lyla Bhalla-Ladd

Testimony for DC Council: PRO Lower Voting Age

Hello. My name is Lyla Bhalla-Ladd, I go to the National Cathedral School, I am 15 years old, and I believe that the voting age should be lowered to 16 years in DC. It is easy enough to recognize the data that proves that when minors can vote, they not only develop voting habits early in life, but they also inspire their parents to vote as well. Increasing voter turnout is a very healthy benefit for the country that has struggled with this issue. However, turnout is not the only reason DC teens should be able to vote.

I want to recognize the involvement and political awareness of the DC teen population. Not only have we organized marches, walk-outs, die-ins, and protests, but we've also participated in larger nationwide movements like the Womens' March, the National Walkout, and the March for Our Lives. Gen Z has become one of the most politically active and aware generations. This is no coincidence in our current political climate. Teens today have been exposed to more violence, discrimination, and punishment than ever before. For example, teens all around the country have had the horrific experience of a school shooting. These experiences cause life-long perspectives on gun violence and gun laws. Unfortunately, only teens know the experience of a school shooting, and they are not enfranchised to repeal the second amendment, or at least implement stronger gun reform. In such a pressing time as this when in there have been 23 school shootings in only 2018, we cannot overlook a highly affected part of the population, which is teens.

A common argument against lowering the voting age is that minors do not have adult experiences that would make them mature enough to vote. However, teens can live

independently once they are 16. This country clearly believes in the independence and maturity of 16-year-olds. It is hypocritical of our country to not allow teens to vote if we allow them to be independent like adults and also to endure experiences only adults should have to. While I would like to live in a world in which minors have the privilege of naivety; the reality of America is that minors experience more violence, discrimination, and even criminal punishment than they should. Until our country is safe enough so that teens do not endure what they do so young, we cannot continue to politically silence them. Thank you.

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Public Testimony from Aaron Huertas for BILL 22-0778, THE "YOUTH VOTE AMENDMENT ACT OF 2018"

Wednesday, June 27, 2018

My name is Aaron Huertas and I've lived and worked in the District for 15 years. I currently reside in Brookland.

My work has included youth voter registration and mobilization, science advocacy, and assisting local governments, including our own, with implementing their climate plans. Right now I work for Swing Left, a grassroots group helping about 20,000 Washingtonians flip Congressional seats with our progressives neighbors in Virginia and around the country.

I'm here today in my personal capacity as a civics nerd. How big of a civics nerd? When I was a teenager, I pushed for an amendment to our student government constitution to require class officers to send voter registration forms to students when they turned 18. That kind of civics nerd!

And like a lot of you, I was precocious and outspoken as a teenager. And the best way an adult could alienate me in those days was to tell me I'd understand when I was older. Because teenagers already understand plenty. They have values, they have rich inner lives, they often read more than we do and they're definitely more tech savvy. So I promised myself I would never forget what being 16 felt like and I would never dismiss someone's value to our society because of their age.

But we are dismissing millions of young people right now. There are more than 16.6 million people aged 14 to 17 in America who are disenfranchised.¹ That's more people than live in Pennsylvania, our 5th largest state, which gets 18 members of Congress and 20 electoral votes.

And when we disenfranchise young people, we also undervalue their issues: student loan debt, gun violence in our schools, climate change.

Of course, I don't have to tell this committee about disenfranchisement. We live in the District. I lived in a condo building named after Julius Hobson, who fought for home rule. I've stood in Frederick Douglass's living room. I've read his letters in support of abolition, of voting rights for black citizens and his support for the women's suffrage movement.

So I bear that history in mind when I hear arguments against the youth vote. That teenagers are too irresponsible. Too immature. Too impressionable. Because those are just stereotypes that have kept people from the franchise. And let's be honest: we all know some people in their 40s

¹ U.S. Census Bureau data.

and 50s who are irresponsible, immature and impressionable, too! But we'd never argue for disenfranchising them.

Because voting is not a driving test. It isn't about competence. It's about who counts in society. I don't know what the lower limit for voting rights in America should be. But 16 sounds like a great start. After all:

- 17-year olds in our District can sign up for military service.²
- 16-year olds can drive a car.³
- 14-year olds are permitted to work in the District.⁴
- And District residents as young as 10 years old can work selling newspapers.⁵

So our law says the young men and women in the District can labor. To have their income and their spending taxed. But not to vote! I think we should fix that, because when I see "taxation without representation" on our license plates, I know we mean it.

So please pass this bill and join our neighbors in Takoma Park and Hyattsville who have successfully implemented similar legislation. And please adopt a program to instruct first-time voters on how to exercise their rights.⁶

So thank you to the committee for your time. And if you're ever looking for a new license plate motto for the District, I have a suggestion: Democracy is pretty cool. We should try it some time.

² <https://www.usa.gov/join-military>

³ <https://dmv.dc.gov/service/obtain-real-id-leamer-permit>

⁴ <https://code.dccouncil.us/dc/council/code/sections/32-207.html>

⁵ <https://code.dccouncil.us/dc/council/code/sections/32-201.html>

⁶ Get Out the Vote!: How to Increase Voter Turnout. Page 116. Studies have found that such programs increase turnout rates by at least 9 percent compared to control groups.

Bill Bystricky
President, Growing Democracy
Testimony to DC City Council on Voting Age.

I'm Bill Bystricky, President of Growing Democracy, and we are proud to stand here today in support of young voters.

Earlier in life, I was a high school teacher. I taught government. And I know first-hand that the greatest barrier to teaching civics is embodied in the sentence I heard from my students again and again: "What difference does it make if we understand how government works? We can't even vote!"

America's democracy surrounds these youth, but too many feel locked out. The policies from those on high too often tell students that they are not really part of this society, that their views and their values do not matter, that their participation is not wanted.

And in turn, many teenagers respond with bitterness, telling themselves that America does not matter, that democracy does not really mean anything. They develop the habits that look, from a distance, like apathy. They remain unengaged, sometimes for life. Voter turn-out keeps sinking, and America looks less like the democracy we wish it to be.

In the last few years, however, I've seen good people turn this around. In cities like Hyattsville and Takoma Park, 16-year-olds have been invited to take part in elections, and the results have been wonderful. Teenagers are learning civics hands-on. They now feel like real members of their communities, and they are developing habits of active and responsible citizenship that can last a lifetime.

In these cities, people younger than 18 are turning out to vote at higher rates than any other age-group. Their voting lives get off to a great start when they have nurturing parents and teachers to help them navigate the complexities of our election system.

In these cities, voting is fast becoming a family event. Parents will take their son or their daughter to cast the first vote with the same pride in their hearts they will feel at their child's graduation.

And in some households, 16-year-old voters are even inspiring their non-voting parents to move past a lifetime of cynicism and to participate themselves.

This 16 voting-age is rejuvenating democracy.

And here in DC, the benefits will be even stronger. Because you will be inviting students to take part in the most engaging elections in this country, and that will magnify student involvement, it will magnify the habits of citizenship they develop.

And with DC's national prominence, you will set the example that leads America in revitalizing our democracy.

By passing this proposal, DC will remind America of the importance of “No taxation without representation,” of governments “deriving their just power from the consent of the governed.” These aren’t just words. These are the principles that define democracy.

No nation has ever been perfect in honoring these principles, but America has a proud tradition of always moving closer to this democratic ideal, always seeking to enfranchise more people and bring them into the national family. That tradition is honored in many of this city’s beautiful monuments and museums, and what a joy to see these values alive in this legislative body.

Throughout our history, there have always been naysayers. People who said, “We can’t enfranchise this group, because they can’t be trusted to vote responsibly. They’ll just vote the way someone else tells them to. Besides, we all know these people have brains that don’t work as well as our own.” All of those shameful arguments were made in the past against every group that sought to be included. And all of those arguments are being leveled today against teenagers.

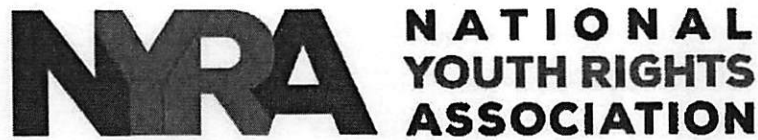
But modern science is shutting down those old arguments. Scientific studies on 16-year-old voters in Scotland and Austria have confirmed that these voters do their own research and make independent choices just like adult voters do, and they represent their interests just as effectively. Brain science here in America has shown that 16-year-olds have all the cognitive voting skills that older voters have.

Those today who call for more democracy have the facts on their side, and they also have history on their side.

By passing this proposal, you will affirm the most important values in a democracy. Representation. Inclusion. A say in the policies that impact one’s life.

It isn’t enough to put these principles on a license plate or in a museum; leaders must put these principles into practice.

So thank you for doing just that as you move forward on this fabulous proposal.



Testimony of
Brian Conner
On behalf of the
National Youth Rights Association
<http://www.YouthRights.org>

on

Bill 22-0778
The Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018

Before the Committee on the Judiciary & Public Safety of the Council of the District of
Columbia

June 27, 2018

At the National Youth Rights Association, we believe that voting is a fundamental human right. While there are now statistics showing that 16-year-olds are capable of voting, we have been advocating for a lower voting age for twenty years- because we think it's unjust, undemocratic and discriminatory to deny anyone the right to vote.

Youth are affected by public policy just as much as anyone else, which is why we've supported a lower voting age even before youth were proven to be great voters. Youth are expected to follow the law but have no say in making it. Teenagers can be tried as adults and sent to adult prisons. Youth are also most affected by education policy, poverty¹, and issues that affect their future such as environmental degradation, long-term government debt, and social security.

But we live in a society where power is exclusively in the hands of adults. We assume that individuals over the age of 18 are capable of deliberation and reason and will make sound decisions at the ballot box. As we saw in the election two years ago that is not always the case. The trouble is that however intelligent or competent or informed a person is, they are indelibly influenced by their own experiences and environment. Their own needs, their own wants, their own surroundings. No matter how intelligent a 60-year-old white Harvard professor is, he can't know the experiences of an immigrant mother crossing the border, or a poor working-class man in Ohio, or a black teenager in DC. That doesn't make him selfish or uncompassionate, he probably cares about helping those others, but unless he truly walks in their shoes he won't really know their life or their needs.

¹ Jason, Breslow M. 2012. "By the Numbers: Childhood Poverty in the U.S." PBS. November 20. Accessed November 27, 2017. www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/by-the-numbers-childhood-poverty-in-the-u-s/

Those of us in the District of Columbia don't like having voters in other states decide our future or assume they know what is best for us. No matter how well meaning they may be. Young people are no different. A 16-year-old in DC may not have the advanced degrees of some university professor, they may not be an expert on public policy, but they are an expert on their own life.

It was just this principle that led a local NYRA activist, Michelle Blackwell, to first introduce the issue of lowering the voting age to councilmembers David Grosso and Charles Allen in 2015. That summer concerns about crime resulted in town halls for DC residents to discuss the violence happening on their streets. She attended one and was shocked at the way teenagers were treated. They were patronized, they were ignored, they were given the very clear message, whether spoken or not, that only the views of adults were worth hearing. Even though young people were the ones being victimized by the crime and seeing this issue first hand, their experiences were ignored. She worked with NYRA and decided that only lowering the voting age would get young people taken seriously. She is right.

It is fundamentally unfair to expect women's interests be represented by men, for DC's interests to be represented by Montana, or for teenager's interests to be represented by adults. This is the heart of democracy and the heart of America. Our nation is founded on the principle that for the government to be just, it must derive its power from the consent of the governed. Young people are certainly governed, overly so we would argue, but if they cannot vote they cannot consent and the adult-run government that rules over them is thus unjust.

We know that young people will turn out to vote if given the chance. We know that studies show young people have the mental capacity to make sound decisions while voting. We know that the Voting Rights Act of 1965 states that anyone with a sixth-grade education possesses sufficient literacy, comprehension and intelligence to vote. But fundamentally, the only important fact is that teens are human beings, not property. To deny their right to vote, to deny them control over their lives, to deny them a voice in matters that affect them, is to discriminate against them solely on the basis of their age.

Ageism is as irrational and harmful as sexism and racism, and we should not stand for it. Since America has been founded, we have seen the inalienable rights we all deserve slowly expanded to more and more people. The ongoing fights for civil rights, womens' rights and LGBTQIA+ rights are not fights we should still be having, but they are fights we will continue having until we win. Likewise, the fight for a lower voting age isn't a fight we should be having. It shouldn't be the norm for a democratic country to refuse representation to 70 million of its citizens. But it is the norm, and it's time to start fighting.

Thank you.



Independent Research. Poverty Solutions. Better DC Government.

**Testimony of Hannah Kohanzadeh, Policy Research Assistant
At the Public Hearing on Bill 22-0778, Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018
DC Council Committee Judiciary and Public Safety
June 27, 2018**

Chairperson Allen and members of the Committee, good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Hannah Kohanzadeh and I am a Policy Research Assistant at the DC Fiscal Policy Institute, a division of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. DCFPI is a member of the Vote 16 DC Coalition, which includes DC's leading children's policy, advocacy, and service nonprofits. At DCFPI, we promote budget choices to reduce economic and racial inequality and build widespread prosperity for all residents in the District, through independent research and policy recommendations.

Amending the voting age to 16-years-old provides DC an opportunity to improve our democracy in three ways. First, voting earlier reinforces voting as a habit. Second, expanding our civic base promotes better governance. Third, by lowering our voting age we can empower more of our residents born and raised in the District to vote.

Voting is a habit. Multiple studies show that voting is a gradually acquired behavior.¹ Voting must be practiced until it is second nature, similar to driving. In fact, when determining if a person will participate in an upcoming election it is more significant if a person voted in the previous election than how old they are or how much education they have received.² Meanwhile, research shows that 16- and 17-year-olds statistically have the same civic knowledge as 18- and 21-year-olds.³ With all this in mind, allowing residents to begin to vote at eighteen is less than ideal. For many young adults eighteen is a less stable time of life than sixteen is. It can be a period of transition, as 18-year-olds move for careers or education. While in the midst of that transition, they may not be able to make time to register and begin to exercise their voting rights. By enabling our younger residents to vote earlier in life we set them up to take civic action more frequently throughout their entire lives.

It is important to recognize that 16- and 17-year-olds contribute to and are active members of our community. They drive, work, pay taxes, and use city services, and yet do not have the same say in the city's decision-making. These residents deserve the opportunity to influence the laws that impact their everyday lives. When granted the right to vote, 16- and 17-year-olds show up. Our neighbors in Maryland's Takoma Park, Hyattsville, and Greenbelt have seen increases in voter turnout after they passed legislation allowing residents sixteen and older to vote in municipal elections. Takoma Park saw 44 percent of registered 16- and 17-year-olds vote in their 2013 elections, which was the first election cycle the newly enfranchised could vote in.⁴ Most importantly, 16- and 17-year-olds had the highest voting rate among any age group in that election.⁵ These young adults care about their communities and how they are regulated; they should be allowed to express their political will for the benefit of everyone in the District.

Ultimately by lowering our voting age to 16-years-old we may engage more residents born and raised in the District to participate in and shape DC's governance. More than half of DC students live east of the river.⁶ Lowering the District's voting age to sixteen will empower more residents to vote, and strengthen representation in Wards 7 and 8. Last week in our 2018 Primary Election, only 17.15 percent of registered voters cast a ballot. Wards 7 and 8 had the lowest voter turnout at 11.77 percent and 7.73 percent

respectively.¹ By making more residents eligible to vote, we can change the culture around voting in DC from infrequent to commonplace. The District's younger members are in touch with the needs and challenges facing the city. They ought to have the respect and opportunity to direct and elect city officials to actualize their vision for their home.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

¹ Eric Plutzer, "Becoming a Habitual Voter: Inertia, Resources, and Growth in Young Adulthood," *American Political Science Review* 96, no. 1 (2002).

Gerber, Alan S., Donald P. Green, and Ron Shachar, "Young May Be Habit-Forming: Evidence from a Randomized Field Experiment," *American Journal of Political Science* 47, no. 3 (2003): 540-50.

² Daniel Hart and Robert Atkins, "American Sixteen- and Seventeen-Year-Olds Are Ready to Vote," *Annals of the American Academy* 633 (January 2011): 208.

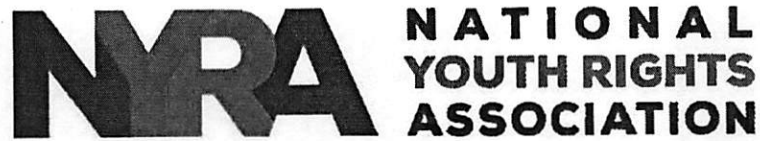
³ Ibid.

⁴ "Young Voices At the Ballot Box: Lowering the Voting Age for Local Elections in 2017 and Beyond," *Generation Citizen*, Version 2.0 – Jan 2017.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ "Population by age group," Kids Count, https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/6747/population-by-age-group-by-ward?loc=19&elect=21&details=21_1852_1859_false_870,572,809,30,808_3923,214,838,123_13833.

⁷ "Primary Election 2018- Election Night Unofficial Results" available at <https://electionresults.dcboc.org/election-statistics/2018-Primary-Election>.



Testimony of
Alex Koroknay-Palicz
On behalf of the
National Youth Rights Association
<http://www.YouthRights.org>

on

Bill 22-0778
The Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018

Before the Committee on the Judiciary & Public Safety of the Council of the District of
Columbia

June 27, 2018

The right to vote is one of the most fundamental rights we have as Americans. Indeed, it is the very reason that our nation exists. When we declared our independence, we declared that government must be based upon the consent of the governed. It is a concept that had been discussed for decades by the Enlightenment thinkers, but it took someone to go first. The United States was the first republic of the modern age and since 1776 most countries in the world have followed our lead.

Yet despite fighting a revolution for the principle that all men were created equal, the right to vote that underpinned our society was very limited. Only white, male, property owners over the age of 21 were permitted to vote. Most of the people in this country were still left out of our democracy. More struggle was needed.

Indeed, in 1776 John Adams, who would later be our second president, had this to say about expanding the right to vote to those without property:

“it is dangerous to [...] alter the qualifications of voters. There will be no end of it. New claims will arise. Women will demand a vote. Lads from 12 to 21 will think their rights not enough attended to, and every man, who has not a farthing, will demand an equal voice...”¹

John Adams was afraid of it, but he provided a handy blue print for the movement to expand suffrage.

¹ Philip B. Kurland and Ralph Lerner, ed., *The Founders' Constitution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 1:394-96 Accessed June 26, 2018. <http://www.vindicatingthefounders.com/library/adams-to-sullivan.html>

Kentucky, a new state in 1792, became the first state to allow non-property-owning men to vote. After they went first, other states followed over the next 64 years and by 1856 all white men were permitted to vote in all states. We declared that we finally had universal suffrage.

But we didn't.

After more struggle, and a bloody civil war, the 15th Amendment was ratified in 1870, and non-white men (at least on paper), were allowed to vote. Once again, we declared ourselves to have universal suffrage.

But it still wasn't universal.

After yet another struggle, Wyoming Territory became the first place in the United States to allow women to vote in 1869. 53 years later and the rest of the nation followed suit, ratifying the 19th Amendment in 1922. Once more, we declared the United States to have universal suffrage.

But we still didn't.

Millions of Americans were still denied the right to vote. Poll taxes and literacy tests stripped away the right to vote from black Americans and the voting age of 21 still denied young people their equal right to vote. The struggle continued.

The campaign to lower the voting age to 18 saw its first victory during World War II when Georgia lowered its age. Other states followed and 28 years later, the 26th Amendment was ratified granting the right to vote to all Americans 18 and older.

The next campaign, our current campaign, is the campaign to lower the voting age to 16. Like all the other movements that have come before us, and all the movements that will come after, the struggle to expand voting rights takes time. Decades of time.

The National Youth Rights Association was founded in 1998 and from our very beginning lowering the voting age was a top priority. Over the years, our young members have worked on campaigns and bills in dozens of states. Massachusetts, Florida, Iowa, Texas, California, Minnesota, New York and many, many more. We have petitioned, we have lobbied, we have testified, we have protested. Each unsuccessful campaign planted a seed that grew over time to build the movement.²

In 2003, for example, student members of NYRA's DC chapter began a petition campaign to lower the voting age in Takoma Park, Maryland to 16. We failed to gather enough signatures to put it on the ballot, but it generated buzz around town and some individuals who signed the petition would, 10 years later, find themselves on the city council. A seed was planted.

NYRA-DC testified before the DC City Council in 2010. And then, in 2015, NYRA member Michelle Blackwell lobbied councilmembers David Grosso and Charles Allen who soon

²The Movement to Lower the Voting Age. Accessed June 26, 2018. <https://www.youthrights.org/issues/voting-age/history-of-the-movement/>

introduced the Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2015. It stalled in committee, but a seed was planted.

The first of such seeds blossomed in 2013 when Takoma Park, Maryland became the first city in US history to lower its voting age to 16 for local elections. Inspired by the actions of Takoma Park, several Maryland towns have followed their lead and lowered their voting ages for local elections.

Each of these towns, however, are all very small. And none of them have lowered their voting ages for state or federal elections. DC is different. DC is a world class city. Our nation's capitol. DC has almost 40 times the population of Takoma Park, if passed this bill will enfranchise more 16 and 17-year-olds than all the voting population of Hyattsville. And, crucially, in addition to allowing 16 and 17-year-olds to vote for local elections, if passed DC will be the first place in the nation where they can vote for president.

DC has the chance to be like Kentucky who first enfranchised non-property holding men, or Wyoming who first extended suffrage to women. Setting an example for the rest of the nation to follow. It may take decades more before all 16-year-olds are able to vote, but it will happen. And DC will be remembered in the history books as the first major city to do it. DC will show the John Adams' of today once again that there is nothing dangerous about extending the right to vote, indeed it is precisely what makes us American.

To the Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety, June 27, 2018
Testimony in favor of lowering the voting age to 16

by Mary Beth Tinker
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I am so happy to speak in solidarity with DC's amazing and beautiful young people today. Their victory in securing voting rights will surely go down in history, and inspire youth for generations to come.

As a nurse, I have seen the need for youth voting rights firsthand. At Prince George's Hospital, where I most recently worked, young people from DC arrive night and day in all states of distress and trauma. One boy who had been shot in the chest had a big dollar sign tattooed on his neck. I thought it was both tragic and ironic, considering that he had absolutely no say over the budget policies that might have kept him safe.

Where was the budget to keep teens from being shot on their way home from school, or at home, or in their neighborhood where their school or recreation center used to be, or should be? Teens deprived of a vote are also deprived of a society to meet their needs.

In fact, today in this building, there is a DC Council hearing to decide the fate of the historic Crummell School in Ivy City, which has been closed for over 40 years. Area youth desperately want the school to be a recreation and community center, and have conducted door-to-door campaigns, rallies, and even written songs for their cause. Will the youth prevail, or will the desires of wealthy developers bent on gentrification prevail?

One-third of DC's youth live in poverty. In fact, of all age groups, they are the most likely to live in poverty. They live in substandard housing or on the streets, & deal with a host of dangers. To change that, they need their rights, including the right to vote.

The rights of youth is something that I know about. When I was thirteen, I was one of a group of students suspended from school for wearing black armbands to mourn the dead in Vietnam and call for a truce. I was inspired by youth of the civil rights movement and others. The American Civil Liberties Union took our case to the Supreme Court, with a victory in 1969 for the rights of students in "Tinker vs. Des Moines".

Now, students are speaking up and standing up again, and I want them to know that there are many adults cheering them on. History will applaud the brave young people like those here today, and the thousands they represent who could not be here. Yesterday, I was with DC teens taking part in a "Soul of the City" program. Most were in favor of lowering the voting age, saying, "We should have a say. Our voices matter".

And their voices do matter. Youth may be the future, but they are also the present, and I know they will succeed in taking their rightful place in our democracy.

TESTIMONY

June 27th, 2018

Abby Kiesa

Bill 22-0778, the "Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018"

Good Afternoon, my name is Abby Kiesa, and I serve as Director of Impact at a nonpartisan research center called CIRCLE. CIRCLE – the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement - was founded in 2001 to bring data and research to bear on how to increase youth voting and high quality civic education. We are the preeminent research institute about youth voting in the US and are based at the Tisch College of Civic Life at Tufts University.

I myself have worked at CIRCLE for almost 13 years researching youth voting. Over half of this time, I have led CIRCLE's electoral work – answering questions from the field, analyzing voting data and learning from those on the ground. I've seen many election cycles go by and lots of data and commentary on young voters. As a result, I'd like to underscore two points that have not changed and do not change each cycle: voting is a habitual act and barriers to voting start even before youth reach 18. Untenable gaps *among* youth have persisted for decades and these dynamics can change that, and make the youth electorate more representative, with big changes like this.

Research has documented that voting is a habitual and social act. The earlier in life someone starts to vote, the more likely it will be that they will be a lifelong voter (Plutzer, 2002). Voting is habitual, and as a result is very influenced by what's happening around young people, whether others are engaged and systematically encourage youth to be engaged. For example, in his research David Campbell found that norms related to political engagement in teenage years have a lasting impact. Young people continue to have a higher turnout rate, even into their mid-30s, if they went to schools where a majority of students believe they should vote (Campbell, 2005).

On a related note, analysis of CIRCLE's national youth survey conducted right after the 2012 election found that learning about voting in high school predicts actual voting once people reach age 18 (2013). Therefore, the ability to cast a ballot while in school would strengthen and underline the immediate relevance to and application of civic education.

This brings me to my second point, which is that barriers to voting start even before youth reach 18 years old. This is important, since voting is habitual and learned, because the inertia of non-participation can set in, rather than civic habits and an identity as someone whose voice matters. These barriers include:

- Outdated civics in k12 classrooms, which doesn't address 21st century information and political dynamics critical to informed voting (McAvoy et al, 2016)
- Negative perceptions of political leaders

- Little to no exposure to what we call civic practices, where youth get to experience and participate in collaborative decision-making, are in settings where their voice matters and where skills important to civic engagement are learned
- Finally, we don't systematically and authentically ask young people to participate. Too many young people, as we've seen in the data many time, don't think people want them to vote or think anyone will listen to them.

To call the US a strong democracy, we must send a different message and we can do this through stronger and clearer processes that involve more youth and a more representative group of youth. Right now, young people with more advantages are more likely to vote. All young people deserve to know their voice matters but 18 is too late to receive that message.

Good Afternoon. My name is Michael Riley Place and I have a confession to make, I voted in the 2016 primary election when I was sixteen. This wasn't exactly voter fraud, I stood behind my Mom and "suggested" whom she should vote for. I had spent a lot of time in the preceding week researching each candidate before making a careful decision on who would be the best for our country. However, despite all my research, despite taking an AP Course in US Government, despite reading independently about the US Government and politics, despite paying taxes and living here most of my life, I was denied the ability to participate in my Democracy, and forced to do so vicariously through my mother.

I am speaking on behalf of Generation E, a Political Action Committee run entirely by high school and college students in the DMV. Although I have had a lot of fun working with other teenagers on this project it is pretty ridiculous that we had to form a PAC in order to have our voices heard.

Generation E PAC is a youth issues PAC¹. Although I am now of voting age, I co-founded the PAC with some of my friends last year. The E in the name stands for environment, education, and engagement, the three most pressing issues affecting my generation. Although these issues affect us extensively, they have not received adequate attention due to the fact that they disproportionately affect young people, a disenfranchised group of Americans who lack the ability to speak with the vote.

On both environmental and educational issues, young Americans vote differently than older Americans, yet only the latter are represented at the polls. One of the greatest examples of this is the state of the natural environment. The younger generations will inherit this world, and should have some say in the state of the world they inherit, rather than allowing older people to profit off destruction they will never witness, as is the case now. My friends care about climate change deeply and this is due to age rather than partisan divide. A Pew Research Center poll shows that young Republicans are more likely to be liberal on climate change than their older counterparts².

Furthermore, education is the ultimate youth issue, an issue which the government is not fully inclined to address due to the lack of youth voting power. In the words of Malcolm X: "Education is the passport to the future". In states around the country education is not receiving the emphasis it deserves. Take Oklahoma in which school boards have been given the option to opt-in on a four day school week as a cost saving measure³. The burden of this will fall entirely on those educated in this system, yet these citizens lack the ability to vote against it. I repeat, both on environmental and educational issues, young Americans vote differently than older Americans, yet only the latter are represented at the polls.

¹ Generationepac.org

² www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2017/04/climate-polling-burnout/523881/

³ www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/with-state-budget-in-crisis-many-oklahoma-schools-hold-classes-four-days-a-week/2017/05/27/24f73288-3cb8-11e7-8854-21f359183e8c_story.html?utm_term=.f34deec9600

One of the concerns I have heard over youth voting is that once enfranchised, only a small number of students will utilize this power. This assumption is absolutely false. Just last night, several of my Maryland friends stayed up until almost two watching the primary election. Think about this for a moment, teenagers watching bar graphs on the screen grow and shrink while cheering as if this were a sports game. This passion has been demonstrated in Takoma Park and Hyattsville, in which voters under 18 voted at a higher rate than voters over 18⁴. Millennials vote at a lower rate than older generations, a crisis resulting in lack of representation of young people even once legally enfranchised. I truly believe that if young people are given the opportunity to cast their first ballot while living in a stable home environment and enjoying the privilege of a government class in school in which to discuss the importance of civic education, we can change the political culture of the United States to form a more participatory Democracy and a government which accurately represents the will of all people. I truly believe that we must lower the voting age to sixteen to direct the attention needed to the state of our natural environment and education systems. I ask that the DC council set a national precedent lower the minimum voting age to sixteen.

⁴www.governing.com/news/headlines/gov-maryland-city-sees-high-turnout-among-teens-after-election-ref orm.html

Derek Summerville
1215 First Street NE, 8G
Washington, DC 20002
Ward 6

June 27, 2018

Testimony in Support of Lowering the Voting Age to 16 in Washington, D.C.

Good Afternoon. My name is Derek Summerville, and I'm a relatively new resident of Washington D.C.'s 6th Ward. While I've only worked and lived in D.C. since last October, I've spent the better part of the last decade working with youth around the country on civic engagement through the YMCA's Youth and Government program.

YMCA Youth and Government, which currently serves over 55,000 middle school and high school students around the country, including here in DC, is designed to ensure that democracy is learned by each generation, and works to develop engaged citizens and servant leaders inspired to affect change in their communities, schools, cities, states, nation, and world.

Over the past 10 years of my involvement with the program, from my time as a student participant to my current role as a national resource coordinator, I've worked with hundreds, if not thousands, of young people seeking to represent the needs and aspirations of their peers, families, and communities in the civic process.

Nothing is more personally rewarding than watching these students advocate for a policy or cause they believe in, and nothing means more to me than ensuring that youth believe their voice matters.

Yet, for all of the trust that my students have placed in me to provide them a platform and the means to be heard, I cannot help but feel that I'm failing them.

No matter how many times I tell them that their voice matters, on Election Day, they know it doesn't. They know that despite being subject to more public policy and government regulations at age 16 than at almost any other time in life, we do not trust them to have a say in how that government is run.

As a 16-year old, you are more likely to be homeless, hungry, or harmed by violence than almost any other age demographic of the voting-eligible population. On so many issues, young people are closest to the pain, yet all too often furthest from the power.

The only message this disenfranchisement sends to young people is that voting, and to a larger extent civic engagement, is not an effective means by which to address what ails their communities.

I hear all the time that lowering the voting age is useless because young people don't – and won't – vote. While I'd argue that our current system of elections is archaic and designed to discourage even eligible young people from voting, that misses the deeper point that most young people have few credible reasons to trust the ballot box.

Trust in our civic institutions is at historic lows. Who can blame young people for distrusting a process that has shown no willingness to trust them, and in many cases only perpetuates injustices and inequalities that we teach youth to only address through the civic process.

We can't blame youth for low turnout while simultaneously doing everything we can to erode their trust in the process we prevent them from engaging in until they are 18.

I can think of no greater achievement for any representative government than the extension of suffrage. This is nothing less than the expansion of our community's civic capacity and a long overdue delivery of the rights and sacred promises at the heart of our nation's founding.

That's the story of this city, and the story of our country – the often painfully slow and equally as painfully won path to a more inclusive democracy.

There aren't too many times along that path when legislative bodies like this Council have had the opportunity to use their own votes to give more of their citizens the right to vote as well. What better way for DC to transform itself from the home of "Taxation Without Representation" to the home of "America's Youngest Voters?"

In the words of the students and youth around the country this year who have awakened the conscience of our nation – "the young people will win."

That has always been the case throughout our history, and I urge this Council to help our young people write the next chapter by lowering the voting age to 16. Thank you.

**Testimony of Vasu Abhiraman, Treasurer of DC for Democracy
before the Judiciary Committee
at the Committee of the Judiciary & Public Safety
regarding Bill 22-0778, the "Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018"
June 27, 2018**

Chairperson Allen and Councilmembers, my name is Vasu Abhiraman and I serve as Treasurer of DC for Democracy. I am testifying today on behalf of the 700-plus members of DC for Democracy, an all-volunteer membership organization that is committed to promoting the political empowerment of all DC residents.

Last week, our members voted unanimously to support a resolution in support of lowering the voting age in the District to 16 years. The resolution we passed is attached to my written testimony.

Before the meeting, some skepticism did indeed exist within our organization. Several people, including DC4D steering committee members, recalled their own immaturity and lack of knowledge at the age of 16 and 17 and voiced concerns.

To address these concerns, we invited the youth leaders of the Vote16DC campaign to our monthly meeting last week. We were ecstatic to see you at the meeting as well, Chairperson Allen, a meeting where youth advocates systematically countered the arguments of skeptics and spoke convincingly in favor lowering the voting age to 16. After the presentation and a lively question & answer session, our members, former skeptics proudly included, voted unanimously to support the resolution.

Here in the District, we don't need to be shutting any voices out from the ballot box. Just last week, we saw a primary election in which voter turnout ended up at a shameful 17%. This is a wakeup call. We have far to go to make the District of Columbia a functioning democracy. If we lower the voting age to 16, we can instill the habit of voting in DC residents while they are young. I am impressed by the examples of Takoma Park, MD, as well as countries like Brazil, Argentina and Nicaragua, which show that turnout among 16- and 17-year olds is significantly higher than other young adults. In fact, in the first Takoma Park election that 16-year-olds were eligible to vote in, the turnout rate for 16- and 17-year-olds exceeded that of any other age group.

While no one solution exists to the challenge of lack of voter engagement, we have good reason to hope that lowering the voting age to 16 is one important way to instill the civic habits without which our democracy cannot properly function. Studies show that if a person votes the first time they are eligible, they are far more likely to develop the habit of voting and vote in subsequent elections. And if 16 and 17 year olds turn out in higher numbers than 18 year olds, it's all the more important we allow them to get in the habit of voting.

Lastly, I wanted to propose a framework for thinking about the right to vote. In law, there exists the notion of a rebuttable presumption, a concept with which I'm sure most of you are familiar, where the court assumes something to be true unless someone actively comes forward to prove otherwise, or "rebut the presumption." The most recognizable example is probably that a defendant in a criminal case is presumed innocent, and the prosecution must carry the burden of proving otherwise beyond a reasonable doubt.

I would like to propose that we think about the right to vote the same way. Every person in the District of Columbia is affected by the laws of the District, therefore a rebuttable presumption should exist that every person in the District has the right to vote, as every person should have a say in the laws that affect them.

Now, one could perhaps easily rebut the presumption that toddlers should have the right to vote, for example, by pointing to a lack of intellectual capacity (on average), severe lack of life experience, complete lack of agency, etc. But when it comes to 16 and 17 year olds, human beings in this District who are eligible to drive cars, pay taxes, get married, work full-time, leave home at will, consent to medical treatment, apply for passports, etc., rebutting the presumption that they should have a say in the laws that govern their lives is a tall order. And to put a cutting final point on it, as Trevor Noah stated after the tragic massacre in Parkland, Florida, "If kids are old enough to be shot, they're old enough to have an opinion about being shot." We would add that, when it comes to 16 and 17 year olds, they are old enough to vote out the representatives who aren't doing anything about it. And it's about time that the District of Columbia leads the way for them to have that right.

Thank you.



Resolution regarding the Vote16DC Campaign

Whereas, 16- and 17-year-olds are affected by the policy decisions of elected officials in areas including education, employment, housing, public safety, police conduct, transportation, health care, the environment and more;

Whereas elected officials are not directly accountable to the 16-and-17-year-olds over whose lives they hold such power;

Whereas, many 16-and-17-year-olds work and pay taxes without input into budget decisions;

Whereas, the current low rate of participation in local elections is an obstacle to democratic governance, and lowering the voting age to 16 promotes lifelong voting habits and also increases voting among the families of young voters;

Whereas, research shows that 16-and-17-year olds as a group are as informed and engaged in political issues as older voters as a group;

Whereas many 16-year-olds already bear enormous responsibility, including caring for family members, driving, mentoring other youth, working and paying taxes, preparing for college and careers, and making important health care decisions;

Whereas, lowering the voting age to 16 encourages improved civics education in schools and the community.

Whereas, voting is a behavior that relies on a thought process that is sometimes called "cold cognition," a slow and deliberate process that is as developed by age 16 as it is in adults. "Hot cognition," on the other hand, involves impulsive control, which is not as developed in 16-and-17-year-olds, but is no more of a factor in voting decisions for youth than it is for adults.

Therefore, DC for Democracy supports lowering the voting age to 16 and joins the Vote16DC campaign.

[Passed by acclamation June 21, 2018]

Testimony to DC Council Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety
Public Hearing on Bill 22-0778, the "Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018"

June 27, 2018

Mr. Kendall Bryan
Executive Director
Amy Jacques Garvey Institute

Good Morning, distinguished members of DC city council, it is an honor to provide testimony for you all today. My name is Kendall Bryan and I am the Director of programs for the Amy Jacques Garvey Institute, a community organization based in ward 7. I firstly would like to THANK Councilmember Charles Allen for introducing this bill and for conducting this hearing today. As the Executive Director of the Amy Jacques Garvey Institute I work with youth from ages 14-24 in wards 5, 6, 7, and 8 via the Marion S. Barry Summer Youth Employment Program. They all express to me their desire to vote. In the pursuit of achieveing quality youth workforce outcomes via project based learning: AJG employs a social justice component in our curriculum. In this vein, youth are encouraged to vote as a part of their citizenship duties. Youth always come to me and say they want the power to vote.

Allowing 16 year olds the right to vote is a moral issue. In the 1960s a generation of youth rose up and stood firm against the War in Vietnam. At the time youth activist made the argument “why should they go and die for a war they did not support and could not even vote to choose their leaders.” In 1972 via constitutional amendment did the voting age lower to 18. Every time when the right of the franchise has been expanded new issues come to social consensus. For example the 19th amendment expanded the right to vote to woman and now today we have the #metoo movement. The modern civil right moment of the 1960s had many achievements including the voting rights act of 1965 which President Johnson signed and essenaially expanded to franchise to African Americans.

Youth contribute to our society in many ways via paying their taxes and also volunteering for many worthy causes. Some of these youth have children of their own and surely need a say in their elected leaders. I urge every DC Councilmember to vote *YES* on this Bill. Thank you

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Why (Most) Children Shouldn't Vote

March 19, 2018 - 8:33 PM [Ryan McMaken](#) ⁽¹⁾[Philosophy and Methodology](#) ⁽²⁾[Political Theory](#) ⁽³⁾

Media outlets from [The Washington Post](#) ⁽⁴⁾ to [CNN](#) ⁽⁵⁾ are now calling for changes in law that will allow children to vote.

The motivation appears to be the perception that teenagers are more in favor of gun control than older people. Thus, gun control advocates right now are seeing young people are more reasonable, and humane than their elders. So why not give them the vote? At least then, we would have young people to balance out those awful old people who refuse to defer to the sensible position that cops and soldiers — undoubtedly the most enlightened people among us — should be the only people with guns.

Of course, whether or not most children *actually* agree with gun control advocates is an empirical question and may or may not be true. After all, in the past, polling suggests that young people are not especially pacifist in their views. [As Pew has noted](#) ⁽⁶⁾, the youngest age group (i.e., 18-26) was the most pro-war group in the lead-up to the 2003 invasion of Iraq. This was also true in the days before the Gulf War of 1991, when "on the eve of war in January 1991, young people favored military action over giving sanctions more time by a 54% to 40% margin." Older people were evenly divided on the matter.

Even during the Vietnam War, younger people were more likely to reply "no" to the proposition that the invasion of Vietnam had been a mistake. By 1973, 69 percent of the over-fifty crowd thought that the Vietnam War had been a mistake. Only 53 percent of the under-thirty respondents agreed.

Apparently, as recently as 2006, a great many young people have had no problem with shooting — or dropping bombs on — innocent people.

So, if some activists believe that youth voting is the key to ushering in a utopia of kindler, gentler, more peaceful public policy, they may be very wrong.

After all, objectionable views held by young people aren't exactly a new thing. As one young female abolitionist [explained in nineteenth century America](#) ⁽⁷⁾, there were no eligible bachelors in her community because "there is [sic] no young men here except [Copperheads](#) ⁽⁸⁾, and they are beneath our notice."

But, whether or not young people right now happen to agree with one's opinions is not a terribly good reason to either limit or extend the franchise for younger voters.

While it might be tempting to simply deny the vote to anyone we find annoying or beholden to objectionable politics, a more reasonable approach is to establish an objective measure by which people can be found qualified to participate in elections.

Historically, the franchise has been limited for any number of reasons. The vote has been denied to women, to people under 21, to non-whites, and to paupers.

Sometimes, this was done cynically to simply deny votes to people who, it was feared, would vote "incorrectly." But there were non-cynical rationales as well.

One rationale has been that the members of the excluded group were simply *incapable* of understanding the public policy issues, or perhaps lacked the analytical abilities necessary to make reasonable decisions. This rationale was usually applied to women and children, and sometimes to "inferior" ethnic and racial groups.

Another common rationale was that the members of the excluded group did not have "skin in the game" and thus were not to enjoy the privilege of voting on what to do with public resources to which the excluded person had not contributed.

This second rationale was more commonly applied to paupers who did not own property and often paid very little in taxes. The idea at work here is that taxpayers must be "net contributors" to society before they can be trusted with the vote.

When it comes to children, of course, we could see how *both* of these rationales might apply. After all, current law is clear that minors cannot enter in contracts, thus implying that they are not capable of making good decisions in relation to matters of law and finance.

In this article, however, I would like to focus on the second rationale: that of whether or not children are "net contributors" to the public sphere.

The Net Taxpayers vs. the Net Tax Receivers

If we use the standard of the "net taxpayer" to determine voting eligibility, the first things we notice is that it is not *necessarily* so that all children — and by "children" I mean people under 18 — would be excluded from voting. For example, a 17 year old who attends private school, works at a private sector job and pays payroll taxes may very well be a net taxpayer. That is, he or she may be paying more in taxes that he or she is taking out of public coffers. Thus, we would not be justified in denying the vote to this person, regardless of age. Indeed, by this standard, this 17-year old is *more* qualified to vote than a 40-year-old native-born American who works a government job. This difference between those who are net contributors to the public purse — and those who are net receivers — has long been a fundamental challenge for democratic states.

In his short book *Bureaucracy*, Ludwig von Mises examined this problem in the context of government employees. In a section titled "The Bureaucrat as a Voter" Mises explains:

The bureaucrat is not only a government employee. He is, under a democratic constitution, at the same time a voter and as such a part of the sovereign, his employer. He is in a peculiar position: he is both employer and employee. And his pecuniary interest as employee towers above his interest as employer, as he gets much more from the public funds than he contributes to them.

This double relationship becomes more important as the people on the government's pay roll increase. The bureaucrat as voter is more eager to get a raise than to keep the budget balanced. His main concern is to swell the pay roll.

Mises went on to examine the rise of powerful interest groups in France and Germany in the years before "the fall of their democratic constitutions." He explained:

There were not only the hosts of public employees, and those employed in the nationalized branches of business (e.g., railroad, post, telegraph, and telephone), there were the receivers of the unemployment dole and of social security benefits, as well as the farmers and some other groups which the government directly or indirectly

subsidized. Their main concern was to get more out of the public funds. They did not care for "ideal" issues like liberty, justice, the supremacy of the law, and good government. They asked for more money, that was all. No candidate for parliament, provincial diets, or town councils could risk opposing the appetite of the public employees for a raise. The various political parties were eager to outdo one another in munificence.

Mises concluded:

Representative democracy cannot subsist if a great part of the voters are on the government pay roll. If the members of parliament no longer consider themselves mandatories of the taxpayers but deputies of those receiving salaries, wages, subsidies, doles, and other benefits from the treasury, democracy is done for.

The logic of this position is simple. If the voting taxpayers (specifically, the net tax contributors) are outnumbered or outcompeted by the net tax receivers, then, inevitably, the economic system will tend more and more toward economic profligacy, leading eventually to bankruptcy.

Naturally, this issue extends well beyond the issue of whether or not children should vote, and it extends well beyond the issue of gun control. This is fortunate since there are important issues out there other than gun control. Moreover, the same rationale about voting qualifications applies to pensioners, immigrants, government employees, and military contractors. This isn't just a conversation about children.

At the heart of the issue, as Mises notes, is whether or not voters see the state as their meal ticket and means to economic security. Once a majority comes to that conclusion, the democratic system is doomed.

So, if we're going to say that children ought not vote, it is best to come up with some objective standard on which to base our conclusion. But if teenagers want the state to confiscate the weapons of everyone but the police, they can start by paying for the state they want to come to their "rescue"^[9].

Source URL: <https://mises.org/wire/why-most-children-shouldnt-vote>

Links

- [1] <https://mises.org/profile/ryan-mcmaken>
- [2] <https://mises.org/austrian-school/philosophy-and-methodology>
- [3] <https://mises.org/austrian-school/political-theory>
- [4] <https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2016/10/27/let-children-vote-even-13-year-olds/>
- [5] <https://www.cnn.com/2018/02/19/opinions/parkland-shooting-voting-age-opinion-douglas/index.html?sr=twCNN021918parkland-shooting-voting-age-opinion-douglas0227PMVODtop>
- [6] <http://www.pewresearch.org/2006/02/21/youth-and-war/>
- [7] <https://mises.org/wire/nasty-politics-and-low-information-voters-are-nothing-new>
- [8] [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Copperhead_\(politics\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Copperhead_(politics))
- [9] <https://mises.org/wire/lack-police-accountability-shows-social-contract-isnt-working>

June 27, 2018

Franco Ciammachilli
721 East Capitol St. SE, #2
Washington, DC 20003

SUPPORT for Bill 22-0778, the "Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018"

To: The Hon. Charles Allen, Chairman,
The Hon. Mary M. Cheh,
The Hon. Anita Bonds,
The Hon. Vincent C. Gray,
The Hon. David Grosso

I'd like to thank the Members of the Committee for being here and the Chairman for giving me this opportunity to express my support for the "Youth Vote Amendment Act" to lower the legal voting age in Washington, DC to age 16.

I'm Franco Ciammachilli, I recently concluded an unsuccessful run to be Ward 6 Committeeman on the DC Democratic State Committee—one of my campaign promises was to engage high school students and DC youth in the political process -- as you may know one of the obligations in the DC Democratic State Committee is to register voters and increase voter participation. While campaigning, I had the opportunity to speak to many young citizens of the city who were often more aware and informed about city policies and issues facing their family and friends than many of their voting adult neighbors. The proliferation of social media and technology has placed more information and the sharing of ideas at the literal fingertips of our youngest citizens.

However, I don't think this conversation regarding lowering the age limit on voting to 16 should focus on how informed our youth is and their ability to fulfill responsibilities with that information, because I guarantee you that for every uninformed young adult, there is an uninformed voting adult. Yet, I do think this conversation should be focused on how we define adulthood in the district and the rights and privileges that come with this designation. Keep in mind that there is no national definition for adulthood other than- "an adult is a person who has attained the age of majority." In DC, a young adult, 16 years and up can be tried as an adult for certain enumerated crimesⁱ- subsequently instituting a once an adult always an adult designation.ⁱⁱ At the age of 16, one can hold a full-time job working 40 hours a week and pay the equivalent in income taxes like their older voting counterparts.ⁱⁱⁱ However, oddly enough, are not allowed to open a bank account without a guardian as a joint account holder. They may also hold a driver's license, legally drive to school, but only in some states can they legally withdrawal from school.^{iv} Further,

the legal age of consent in DC is 16 years of age, meaning young adults are making decisions regarding intimacy and family planning in their own right and are not considered minors—fulfilling the tried and true definition of attaining the age of majority.^v

However complicated the designation to allow young adults aged 16 and 17 to do some things, but not all things-- goes to show we must address how we want to include these citizens' voices and better serve them. These few examples demonstrate that we as a city and community place a mantle of responsibility on our young adults that have already proven they are capable of self-determination and therefore should be able to cast votes to voice their preference in how their tax dollars are spent and who should represent their interests as the future most impacted by the decisions we make today. As a result- I think it is the right decision to support lowering the voting age to 16 in DC.

ⁱ D.C. Code § 16-2301(3)

ⁱⁱ D.C. Code § 16-2307(h)

ⁱⁱⁱ D.C. Code § 32-202

^{iv} D.C. Code § 50-1404.01.(a)(1)

^v D.C. Code § 46-403(4)

Bill 22-0778, the "Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY & PUBLIC SAFETY

2pm, Wednesday, June 27, 2018

Room 500, John A Wilson Building, 1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington DC 20004

Testimony of Martin Moulton

Honorable Judiciary Chair Charles Allen and bill co-signers Councilmembers Anita Bonds, Vincent Gray, Brianne Nadeau, Trayon White, Robert White and Education committee Chair David Grosso,

As your colleague Councilmember Mary Cheh noted publicly earlier this year,

“We [The District Government and DC Public Schools under Muriel Bowser’s “mayoral control”] are still graduating people who are illiterate.”

— 10 March 2018, The Washington Post

Thank you for holding this important hearing on extending the legal voting age to grant citizens as young as 16 years old the right to vote.

When my late father, his brother and five sisters graduated high school in Costa Rica, Central America, they were all fluent in both their native Spanish and English before five of them immigrated legally to the United States to compete for jobs, establish homes and build our family.

For decades now, as reported by the DC Chamber of Commerce officials years ago after a trip to across the Pacific, there are more native Chinese residing in China who are bilingual and speak at least one Chinese language fluently—along with being fluent in at least English. Those bilingual citizens of China could replace every single US citizen and make us all irrelevant, not just every District resident.

However, incredibly, our District Government officials, have been able to perpetuate miseducation schemes that have effectively condemned thousands of our high school students to the prison of illiteracy, filled with low-self esteem, incapable of grasping their full potential much less competing academically with other young people outside of DC Public Schools—who are prepared to compete for seats in college and/or jobs in the Nation’s Capital which allow them to afford housing and live happy productive lives.

Bill 22-0778, the "Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY & PUBLIC SAFETY

2pm, Wednesday, June 27, 2018

Room 500, John A Wilson Building, 1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington DC 20004

It is irresponsible for you and other members of the District government to consider giving the precious right to vote to many members of our community who have for decades proven not to have a basic command of the English language which would permit them to read the United States Constitution and Bill of Rights and even more importantly to be able to read and understand United States' history and furthermore world history which all put the US Constitution and the right to vote in proper context.

Before you do something so short sighted, I would prefer that you consider granting the right to vote to those adults convicted and incarcerated for felony offenses. Keeping adult felons at least minimally engaged in civic life, as we do with misdemeanants, while behind bars—as the US states of Maine and Vermont—majority white jurisdictions—have done for decades. There is no good reason to deny felons the ability to vote via absentee ballots; when they are released they will be forced to live under the laws of those they have elected. Granting District citizens who have committed felonies is a liberty that should not be denied to those who should be guaranteed this basic dignity. And as such a small portion of society, currently less than 3% (and hopefully an even smaller number as we fix the elitist, bigoted and unnecessary laws you keep on the books that criminalize poverty and systematically over throw the underclass), they are a minority group whose concerns we should consider during elections.

Thank you,

Martin Moulton

1510 Fifth St NW, Washington DC 20000

Ward 6 Shaw

2018 DC Libertarian Candidate for Mayor of the District of Columbia

Judiciary & Public Safety Public Hearing

Wednesday, June 27, 2018

2:00PM

Room 500

The Committee on the Judiciary & Public Safety will hold a Public Hearing on the following Legislation:

- **Bill 22-0778, the "Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018"**

The Committee invites the public to testify or to submit written testimony. Anyone wishing to testify at the hearing should contact the Committee via email at judiciary@dccouncil.us or at (202)724-7808, and provide their name, telephone number, organizational affiliation, and title (if any), by **close of business Friday, June 22**. Representatives of organizations will be allowed a maximum of five minutes for oral testimony, and individuals will be allowed a maximum of three minutes. Witnesses should bring **twenty double-sided copies** of their written testimony and, if possible, also submit a copy of their testimony electronically in advance to judiciary@dccouncil.us.

Testimony to the Committee in the Judiciary and Public Safety on B22-0778 the Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018

**Tyesha Ingram
June 27, 2018**

Hello Councilmember Allen. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Tyesha Ingram. I live in Ward 7 and I attend HD Woodson High School. I am a rising senior. I want to be a nurse midwife. I am the President of the National English Honor Society. I work as a peer educator for the Young Women's Project. I educate my peers on safe sex and how to use contraception. I am also one of the leaders on the Vote 16 DC Campaign.

I am here today to testify in support of **Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018** which would lower the voting age in DC to 16 years of age. The legislation will impact young adults and the decisions they make. Their input will help politicians do their jobs better and improve the government systems that involve youth – like public education. The vote would help politicians open their mind up about what it means to be a teen from a teen perspective.

We should have the opportunity to vote about what goes on in our schools and the rules they make. For example, putting sex ed into schools. We worked on it at YWP and two years ago with another group of teens wrote and passed new Health Education Standards. But they are not implemented. That's why the pregnancy rates are still high. They don't know about contraception at a young age. This is just one example of how the schools could be better. If young people could vote, we could provide more feedback on the curricula and encourage them to talk about safe sex.

Another education issue we can change is that certain schools have different classes. Other schools offer more opportunities and clubs. There is a big difference between schools in wards 7 and 8 and schools in the northwest wards. We don't have a lot of electives—like financial classes or even cooking or sewing. We need classes that will help us with the world. The attendance law has a huge impact on young people. First you drop a letter grade and then fail the course. Everyone is focused on that and we need to fix it and that's what we could do if we get the vote.

Another reason I support the Act is because I already have a job and I already pay taxes. When you pay taxes, you are supporting the community and everyone's health. If I am paying taxes, I should be able to vote.

Another important reason for lowering the voting age is so that we can start engaging young people as active citizens now. When I was out collecting signatures for the Vote 16 DC Campaign, youth were really excited about being able to vote – especially for Mayor and the President. A majority of youth will want to vote and will get up to speed. My family always votes, that made a strong impression on me on how important voting is. But a lot of families are not involved in voting. So this is a way to not only get young people involved but everyone in our community.

Conclusion

Thank you for hearing my testimony.

GRAY MATTER

Why We Should Lower the Voting Age to 16

By Laurence Steinberg

March 2, 2018

The young people who have come forward to call for gun control in the wake of the mass shooting at their high school in Parkland, Fla., are challenging the tiresome stereotype of American kids as indolent narcissists whose brains have been addled by smartphones. They offer an inspiring example of thoughtful, eloquent protest.

Unfortunately, when it comes to electing lawmakers whose decisions about gun control and other issues affect their lives, these high schoolers lack any real power. This needs to change: The federal voting age in the United States should be lowered from 18 to 16.

Skeptics will no doubt raise questions about the competence of 16-year-olds to make informed choices in the voting booth. Aren't young people notoriously impulsive and hotheaded, their brains not fully developed enough to make good judgments?

Yes and no. When considering the intellectual capacity of teenagers, it is important to distinguish between what psychologists call "cold" and "hot" cognition.

Cold cognitive abilities are those we use when we are in a calm situation, when we are by ourselves and have time to deliberate and when the most important skill is the ability to reason logically with facts. Voting is a good example of this sort of situation.

Studies of cold cognition have shown that the skills necessary to make informed decisions are firmly in place by 16. By that age, adolescents can gather and process information, weigh pros and cons, reason logically with facts and take time before making a decision. Teenagers may sometimes make bad choices, but statistically speaking, they do not make them any more often than adults do.

Hot cognitive abilities are those we rely on to make good decisions when we are emotionally aroused, in groups or in a hurry. If you are making a decision when angry or exhausted, the most critical skill is self-regulation, which enables you to control your emotions, withstand pressure

from others, resist temptation and check your impulses. Unlike cold cognitive abilities, self-regulation does not mature until about age 22, research has shown. (This is a good reason to raise the minimum age for purchasing firearms from 18 to 21 or older, as some have proposed.)

This psychological evidence is backed up by neuroscientific findings. Neuroimaging studies show that brain systems necessary for cold cognition are mature by mid-adolescence, whereas those that govern self-regulation are not fully developed until a person's early 20s.

If the voting age were lowered, would that necessitate changing other laws to bring them into alignment? Of course not. We use a wide variety of chronological ages to draw lines between minors and adults when it comes to smoking, driving, viewing violent or sexually explicit movies, being eligible for the death penalty and drinking alcohol. Although the specific ages used for these purposes often lack a good rationale, there is no reason lowering the voting age would require lowering, say, the drinking age, any more than allowing people to drive at 16 should permit them to drink or smoke at that age as well.

In addition to the scientific case for lowering the voting age, there is also a civic argument. Consider the dozen or so countries like Argentina, Austria, Brazil and Nicaragua that allow people to vote at 16 in national, state or local elections. In such countries, voter turnout among 16- and 17-year-olds is significantly higher than it is among older young adults.

This is true in parts of the United States as well. In Takoma Park, Md., a city that permits 16- and 17-year-olds to vote in local elections, that age group is twice as likely to vote than are 18-year-olds.

Why is higher turnout among 16- and 17-year-olds so important? Because there is evidence that people who don't vote the first time they are eligible are less likely to vote regularly in the future. Considering that people between 18 and 24 have the lowest voter turnout of any age group in the United States (a country that has one of the lowest rates of voter turnout in the developed world), allowing people to begin voting at an age at which they are more likely to vote might increase future turnout at all ages.

The last time the United States lowered the federal voting age was in 1971, when it went from 21 to 18. In that instance, the main motivating force was outrage over the fact that 18-year-olds could be sent to fight in Vietnam but could not vote.

The proposal to lower the voting age to 16 is motivated by today's outrage that those most vulnerable to school shootings have no say in how such atrocities are best prevented. Let's give those young people more than just their voices to make a change.

Laurence Steinberg (@ldsteinberg) is a professor of psychology at Temple University and the author, most recently, of "Age of Opportunity: Lessons From the New Science of Adolescence."

**Written Testimony of Joshua A. Douglas
Law Professor at the University of Kentucky College of Law
To D.C. City Council on Lowering Voting Age to 16**

My name is Josh Douglas and I am a law professor at the University of Kentucky College of Law. I lived in Washington, D.C. from 1998-2002 when I attended George Washington University and lived in the D.C. suburbs from 2003-2007 when I worked for a year in D.C. and then attended the George Washington University Law School. I study election law, voting rights, and constitutional law. One path of my research has been the movement to lower the voting age to 16 for municipal elections.

When I first learned about the issue, I did not have a strong opinion either way on the merits of the idea. But upon researching the topic in more depth, I have come to realize that lowering the voting age to 16 is a valuable reform that can improve our democracy. I have written several law review articles and Op-Eds about the legal merits and policy wisdom of the proposal.

Instead of rehashing those arguments in-depth here, I have attached an essay that appeared in the *Penn Law Review Online* titled "In Defense of Lowering the Voting Age," which I published in draft form in October 2016 and in final form in early 2017. I have also attached an Op-Ed I wrote for CNN.com to promote the idea. You can find my CV and all of my work, including a few other pieces about lowering the voting age, on my website at www.joshuaadouglas.com.

In sum, my research has found that lowering the voting age to 16 in local elections, such as in D.C., would improve our democracy in several ways: it would engage young voters and create a habit of voting and civic participation; inject

energetic, new ideas into our politics; promote fairness given that we impose various legal obligations on individuals when they turn 16; and create a better educated electorate so long as we also promote stronger civics education in our schools.

Moreover, none of the common objections I hear about lowering the voting age to 16 hold up to academic scrutiny: individuals' brains are cognitively developed enough for voting by age 16; lowering the voting age would not give parents additional votes as teenagers have independent views; and we do not know which side would benefit politically from this reform (though that should be irrelevant to new election laws in the first place).

Lowering the voting age for D.C. elections would be a positive, pro-democracy reform that would create a new generation of engaged citizens. I hope you will read my academic work, provided below, that supports this reform, and I urge you to approve this change to D.C.'s election laws.

ESSAY

IN DEFENSE OF LOWERING THE VOTING AGE

JOSHUA A. DOUGLAS*

INTRODUCTION

In 2016, voters in Berkeley, California, overwhelmingly favored lowering the voting age for school board elections to sixteen.¹ San Francisco came close to passing a similar measure, Proposition F, which would have lowered the voting age to sixteen for all local elections. Unofficial results indicate it lost by approximately 52%–48%.² This close outcome suggests that advocates may continue to push the measure in the future, with a fairly strong chance of success once voters are better educated about its merits.

Lowering the voting age is by no means a radical idea. The Maryland municipalities of Takoma Park and Hyattsville recently lowered the voting age to sixteen for their own elections.³ Turnout among sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds has been relatively robust, strengthening the democratic

* Robert G. Lawson & William H. Fortune Associate Professor of Law, University of Kentucky College of Law. Thanks to Scott Bauries for useful comments and to Grant Sharp for invaluable research assistance. Thanks also to the *University of Pennsylvania Law Review Online*, and particularly Alex Aiken and Bill Seidleck, for timely and excellent edits.

¹ Measure Y1 - City of Berkeley, ACGOV.ORG, http://www.acgov.org/rov_app/current_election/nofrace.jsp?e=230&f=124124.htm [https://perma.cc/2QRF-HBZQ] (last updated Nov. 18, 2016, 8:11 PM).

² November 8, 2016 Unofficial Election Results, CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO, http://www.sfelections.org/results/20161108/#a_english_42 [https://perma.cc/W6G2-3S5F] (last updated Nov. 28, 2016, 4:13 PM); see also Emily Green, *Supervisors OK Ballot Measure to Lower SF Voting Age to 16*, SF GATE (May 10, 2016, 9:02 PM), <http://www.sfgate.com/politics/article/Supervisors-OK-ballot-measure-to-lower-SF-voting-7458077.php> [https://perma.cc/5B88-DZBX].

³ Elena Schneider, *Students in Maryland Test Civic Participation and Win Right to Vote*, N.Y. TIMES (Jan. 9, 2015), <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/10/us/politics/students-in-maryland-test-civic-participation-and-win-right-to-vote.html> [https://perma.cc/K3RD-LX7V].

process in these cities.⁴ Moreover, several countries, including Brazil, Argentina, and Scotland, allow sixteen-year-olds to vote.⁵

This Essay outlines the various policy arguments in favor of lowering the voting age to sixteen. Part I presents a very brief history of the voting age in U.S. elections. It notes that setting the voting age at eighteen is, in many ways, a historical accident, so lowering the voting age for local elections does not cut against historical norms. Part II explains that there are no constitutional barriers to local jurisdictions lowering the voting age for their own elections. Part III highlights the benefits to democracy and representation that lowering the voting age will engender. Turning eighteen represents a tumultuous time for most young adults as they leave home either to enter the workforce or go off to college. Sixteen, by contrast, is a period of relative stability when young people are invested in their communities and are learning about civic engagement in school. Lowering the voting age can, therefore, create a habit of voting and increase overall turnout in later years. Finally, Part IV presents psychological studies demonstrating that, by age sixteen, individuals possess the cognitive capabilities required to perform an act that takes forethought and deliberation like voting. That is, sixteen-year-olds are as good as, say, forty-year-olds at making the deliberative decisions necessary for democratic participation. Part IV also refutes the claim that lowering the voting age will “create” additional votes for parents, as prior experience shows that young people do not simply follow their parents in the voting booth.

In sum, lowering the voting age is a sound mechanism to improve our elections. It brings additional, competent individuals with a stake in electoral outcomes into the democratic process and guarantees them a voice.

In the current political environment, reform advocates should focus their energies particularly on local measures that will increase voter participation—as that is where they are likely to succeed. These local successes can breed statewide reforms once people see the rules working well in local elections.

⁴ See J.B. Wogan, *Takoma Park Sees High Turnout Among Teens After Election Reform*, GOVERNING (Nov. 7, 2013), <http://www.governing.com/news/headlines/gov-maryland-city-sees-high-turnout-among-teens-after-election-reform.html> [<https://perma.cc/23HT-XAJP>] (reporting that “roughly 44 percent of registered voters in the under-18 voting bloc participated in” elections in Takoma Park, Maryland, compared to an overall turnout rate of only 11%); see also GENERATION CITIZEN, LOWERING THE VOTING AGE FOR LOCAL ELECTIONS IN TAKOMA PARK AND HYATTSVILLE, MD: A CASE STUDY 2 (Oct. 2016) [hereinafter GENERATION CITIZEN], <http://vote16usa.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Final-MD-Case-Study.pdf> [<https://perma.cc/CF5K-EYJLH>] (showing higher voter turnout, as a percentage, among sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds than older age groups in the 2013 and 2015 elections, albeit representing a small number of actual voters).

⁵ Angus Johnston, *Why We Should Lower the Voting Age in America*, ROLLING STONE (Nov. 3, 2016), <http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/features/why-we-should-lower-the-voting-age-in-america-w447875> [<https://perma.cc/2GA4-DPSD>].

The fact that Berkeley enacted a lower voting age in 2016 for school board elections is a positive development. Given the close vote in San Francisco, advocates should try again there. Other cities across the country should follow suit. This Essay explains why.

I. A BRIEF HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THE VOTING AGE IN U.S. ELECTIONS

At the Founding, the voting age under British common law was twenty-one.⁶ American colonies simply copied this prior British rule.⁷ Although the reason for setting the voting age at twenty-one is “lost in the mists of time,” “[o]ne—perhaps apocryphal—claim that popped up often in the voting age debates was that twenty-one was the age at which a medieval adolescent was thought capable of wearing a suit of heavy armor and was therefore eligible for knighthood.”⁸ Thus, for the first 182 years of our history (until the ratification of the Twenty-Sixth Amendment), using twenty-one for the voting age was, in many ways, a historical accident. There was no sustained discussion or reasoned justification for not allowing individuals aged twenty or younger to vote. It was just common practice left over from colonial England. The Twenty-Sixth Amendment changed that practice nationwide when it lowered the voting age to eighteen for all national and state elections.⁹ The main impetus for the Twenty-Sixth Amendment was the Vietnam War. Eighteen-year-olds were expected to fight and die for their country, so supporters of the Twenty-Sixth Amendment rallied around the cry of “old enough to fight, old enough to vote.”¹⁰ Further, the youth-driven protests of the late 1960s and early 1970s demonstrated a need for young people to have an outlet for political engagement. The right to vote provided such an opportunity.¹¹

⁶ See Jenny Diamond Cheng, *How Eighteen-Year-Olds Got the Vote* 9 (Aug. 4, 2016) (unpublished manuscript), http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2818730 [<https://perma.cc/U3E8-TPQI>] (noting that “British common law put the age of majority at twenty-one”); see also ROBERT J. DINKIN, *VOTING IN PROVINCIAL AMERICA: A STUDY OF ELECTIONS IN THE THIRTEEN COLONIES, 1689–1776*, at 30–31 (1977) (noting that the colonies at the time of the Founding generally barred individuals under twenty-one from voting in local elections, following the traditions and wisdom of the Old World).

⁷ DINKIN, *supra* note 6, at 30–31.

⁸ Cheng, *supra* note 6, at 9.

⁹ U.S. CONST. amend. XXVI, § 1.

¹⁰ See Cheng, *supra* note 6, at 43–46 (detailing the effects of the Vietnam War on efforts to lower the voting age and concluding that “[t]he ‘old enough to fight, old enough to vote’ refrain from the early 1940s gained new resonance in the late 1960s, as American involvement in Vietnam reached its zenith and public opinion swung against the war”).

¹¹ See *id.* at 46–57 (arguing that “the notion that reducing the voting age would stem the rising tide of student unrest by channeling youthful energies . . . gained a surprising amount of traction, especially among federal legislators”).

The main point for today's debate is that the current voting age is more a product of happenstance than reasoned judgment. The states initially set the age at twenty-one because that was the custom at British common law. The Twenty-Sixth Amendment lowered the voting age to eighteen because young people were asked to fight in an unpopular war and were engaged in significant political protests. But few people considered in-depth why eighteen, as opposed to a different age, was the appropriate age to choose.

II. THE U.S. CONSTITUTION DOES NOT BAR LOWERING THE VOTING AGE FROM EIGHTEEN

The text of the Twenty-Sixth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution provides that "[t]he right of citizens of the United States, who are eighteen years of age or older, to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any state on account of age."¹² Thus, the Twenty-Sixth Amendment sets the voting age at eighteen, but it does not stipulate that eighteen is a floor. Nothing in the language of the Amendment prohibits states or localities from setting a lower voting age.

Similarly, most state constitutions and laws do not forbid a lower voting age for local elections.¹³ For the Berkeley and San Francisco debates in 2016, California law certainly allowed this innovation, as its relevant constitutional provision closely tracks the language of the Twenty-Sixth Amendment and its state laws do not impose any impediments.¹⁴

III. BENEFITS OF LOWERING THE VOTING AGE TO SIXTEEN

Lowering the voting age to sixteen, at least for local elections, will improve our democracy. Democracy flourishes when those who have a stake in the outcome participate—so long as they can make reasoned judgments about who should lead them. Experience has shown that lowering the voting age is one way to improve voter turnout both now and likely into the future.

¹² U.S. CONST. amend. XXVI.

¹³ In a forthcoming article, I explain in detail the legal arguments that surround voter expansions for local elections. See Joshua A. Douglas, *The Right to Vote Under Local Law*, 85 GEO. WASH. L. REV. (forthcoming 2017).

¹⁴ See CAL. CONST. art. II, § 2 ("A United States citizen 18 years of age and resident in this State may vote."); CAL. CONST. art. XI, § 5(a) (conferring upon municipalities broad home rule power to govern "municipal affairs"); CAL. ELEC. CODE § 2000(b) (West 2016) ("Any person who will be at least 18 years of age at the time of the next election is eligible to register and vote at that election."); see also Douglas, *supra* note 13, app. (providing a fifty state survey of state constitutions and statutes regarding the power of municipalities to enact local rules for voting); cf. Tara Kini, *Sharing the Vote: Noncitizen Voting Rights in Local School Board Elections*, 93 CALIF. L. REV. 271, 284 (2005) (outlining analogous legal arguments supporting San Francisco's push to allow noncitizens to vote in school board elections).

Turnout among the youngest current voters, those aged eighteen to twenty-four, is abysmal. In the 2012 presidential election, for example, the turnout rate for persons aged eighteen to twenty-four was 38%, compared to an overall population turnout rate of just under 62%.¹⁵ We need to implement strategies to engage young voters.

Jurisdictions that lower the voting age can experience increased voter turnout. For example, in the November 2013 municipal election in Takoma Park, Maryland—an election with “no state or national offices on the ballot and no competitive local races”—the turnout rate among newly eligible and registered sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds was 44%, while the overall turnout rate was 11%.¹⁶ Yet the first Hyattsville, Maryland, election after the city lowered its voting age—which took place in May 2015, a few months after the change—saw only four new voters in this age group, showing the need for greater education and registration opportunities for young people.¹⁷

With stronger outreach efforts, individuals are more likely to turn out for the first time when they are age sixteen or seventeen as opposed to age eighteen. Why? One possible answer is that sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds are part of their communities, engaged in local debates, and immersed in civic education in high school. By contrast, eighteen-year-olds are graduating from high school, moving away from home, and entering the workforce or enrolling in college. The sheer fact of moving makes it more difficult to begin voting. These individuals must both register ahead of the election and often deal with absentee balloting hurdles. Thus, at an already tumultuous time in their lives, we also expect eighteen-year-olds to jump through various administrative hoops to participate in our democracy. Sixteen-year-olds do not face these same hurdles. Instead, they typically are living at home and are invested in their communities, and they are enrolled in high school, where improved civics education can teach them about the registration process and the intricacies of voting—not to mention the candidates and issues. Indeed, in Takoma Park, one of the mayoral candidates made it a point to reach out to this newly enfranchised age group.¹⁸ Once individuals begin voting at a

¹⁵ THOM FILE, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, U.S. DEPT OF COMMERCE, POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS NO. P20-573, YOUNG-ADULT VOTING: AN ANALYSIS OF PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, 1964–2012, at 2-3 (Apr. 2014), <https://www.census.gov/prod/2014pubs/p20-573.pdf> [<https://perma.cc/7ZSR4-9HFI>].

¹⁶ GENERATION CITIZEN, *supra* note 6, at 4; Wogan, *supra* note 4.

¹⁷ GENERATION CITIZEN, *supra* note 6, at 7; cf. Rebecca Bennett, *Ward and Warner Election Winners; City Exceeds Voter Turnout Goal*, HYATTSVILLE LIFE & TIMES (May 6, 2015), <http://hyattsvillelife.com/ward-and-warner-election-winners-city-exceeds-voter-turnout-goal/> [<https://perma.cc/YX2U-2YRH>] (suggesting that the city exceeded its turnout goals in part because 25% of sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds voted, but not providing the raw number of voters).

¹⁸ See GENERATION CITIZEN, *supra* note 6, at 5-6.

younger age, they are more likely to continue the habit when they leave home.¹⁹

Lowering the voting age thus presents one way to increase overall voter turnout: high participation among young people in local elections will eventually lead to higher turnout in all elections, as these individuals turn eighteen and become eligible to vote in federal and state elections. Studies show that voting is habit-forming; once someone votes in one election, he or she is more likely to vote in subsequent elections.²⁰ Consequently, lowering the voting age in local elections can serve as a catalyst for increased turnout nationwide in later elections. Assuming, from a normative perspective, that higher turnout is better for our democracy, then lowering the voting age is one path to achieve that goal. In addition, once a few cities like Takoma Park, Maryland, or Berkeley, California, lower the voting age without negative consequences to their elections, other cities, and eventually states, are more likely to follow.

There is also a fairness aspect to lowering the voting age.²¹ Although eighteen is the age of legal majority in many states, our society grants certain privileges to, and imposes legal obligations on, sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds. In particular, in most states, sixteen-year-olds may obtain a drivers' license²² and are eligible to work part-time jobs.²³ But they must follow the local

¹⁹ See *infra* note 20 and accompanying text.

²⁰ See Alexander Coppock & Donald P. Green, *Is Voting Habit Forming? New Evidence from Experiments and Regression Discontinuities*, 60 AM. J. POL. SCI. 1044, 1060 (2015) (reviewing various studies and concluding that "a vast body of evidence now suggests that habits form when people vote"); Alan S. Gerber, Donald P. Green & Ron Shachar, *Voting May Be Habit-Forming: Evidence from a Randomized Field Experiment*, 47 AM. J. POL. SCI. 540, 545-48 (2003) (using regression analysis to evaluate voter turnout in separate elections and concluding that "the reason voting behavior is correlated over time is not simply that the background factors that cause people to vote at one point in time reassert their influence during each subsequent election. In addition to the continuities created by socio-psychological and environmental influences, voting and nonvoting per se appear to create behavioral patterns that persist over time").

²¹ See *Lower the Voting Age*, FAIRVOTE, <http://www.fairvote.org/reforms/right-to-vote-amendment/lowering-the-voting-age/> [<https://perma.cc/6L9V-VN53>] (noting that lowering the voting age is "also a matter of fairness: when unable to vote until turning 18, some citizens won't have a chance to vote for their mayor until they are almost 22"); *Top Ten Reasons to Lower the Voting Age*, NAT'L. YOUTH RTS. ASS'N, <http://youthrights.org/issues/voting-age/top-ten-reasons-to-lower-the-voting-age/> [<https://perma.cc/DV8N-JT2D>] ("Youth suffer under a double standard of having adult responsibilities but not rights.").

²² Judith G. McMullen, *Underage Drinking: Does Current Policy Make Sense?*, 10 LEWIS & CLARK L. REV. 333, 360 (2006).

²³ See Fair Labor Standards Act, 29 U.S.C. §§ 212, 213(c) (2012) (specifying restrictions on child labor); 29 C.F.R. § 570.2(a) (2015) (noting that the FLSA "sets a general 16-year minimum age which applies to all employment subject to its child labor provisions in any occupation other than in agriculture"); Peter J. McGovern, *Children's Rights and Child Labor: Advocacy on Behalf of the Child Worker*, 28 S.D. L. REV. 293, 298 (1983) ("In general, the state laws parallel the restrictions and the statutory age breakdowns of the federal statutory scheme").

driving rules and pay taxes on their wages. Sixteen is also the age of majority for consenting to sexual activity in most states.²⁴ Further, in many states, compulsory school attendance ends at age sixteen or seventeen—meaning that high school students may choose to drop-out of school at that age.²⁵ Unless there is a competency-based reason to bar them from voting, then, it seems only fair that we permit sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds to participate in our democratic process.

IV. PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDIES SUPPORT SETTING THE VOTING AGE AT SIXTEEN

Psychologists are in general agreement: sixteen-year-olds are as strong, cognitively speaking, as twenty-year-olds, forty-year-olds, or anyone else older than them at processing the information necessary to vote. Psychologists have recognized two primary kinds of decisionmaking: “hot” cognition and “cold” cognition. Activities that entail “hot” cognition are those that are impulsive, include high levels of emotion or stress, and suffer from significant peer pressure.²⁶ Individuals’ brains are not fully developed to make proper “hot” cognition decisions until about age twenty-one, or perhaps twenty-four or twenty-five.²⁷ “Cold” cognition activities, on the other hand, require deliberation and measured decisionmaking.²⁸ Brains develop the full mechanism for appropriate “cold” cognition by age sixteen.²⁹ These “cold” cognition capabilities do not improve in later years.³⁰

²⁴ Kate Sutherland, *From Jailbird to Jailbait: Age of Consent Laws and the Construction of Teenage Sexualities*, 9 WM. & MARY J. WOMEN & L. 313, 314 (2003).

²⁵ See Table 5.1. *Compulsory School Attendance Laws, Minimum and Maximum Age Limits for Required Free Education, By State: 2015*, NAT’L CTR. FOR EDUC. STAT., https://nces.ed.gov/programs/statereform/tab5_1.asp [<https://perma.cc/MF2B-9KJ2>] (listing each states’ respective age requirements for compulsory school attendance).

²⁶ Laurence Steinberg, Opinion, *A 16-Year-Old Is as Good as an 18-Year-Old – or a 40-Year-Old – at Voting*, L.A. TIMES (Nov. 3, 2014, 5:15 PM), <http://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-steinberg-lower-voting-age-20141104-story.html> [<https://perma.cc/6PYM-CEM3>]; accord Patrick Begley, *Hot and Cold Thinking: Why 16-Year-Olds Are Smart Enough to Vote, but Not Drink*, SYDNEY MORNING HERALD (Mar. 28, 2015), <http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/nsw-state-election-2015/hot-and-cold-thinking-why-16-year-olds-are-smart-enough-to-vote-but-not-drink-20150212-13cpq0.html> [<https://perma.cc/UF2Y-CNQ5>] (discussing how there is no evidence to suggest that sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds cannot make informed decisions).

²⁷ See *supra* note 26.

²⁸ See *supra* note 26.

²⁹ See *supra* note 26.

³⁰ See Vivian E. Hamilton, *Democratic Inclusion, Cognitive Development, and the Age of Electoral Majority*, 77 BROOK. L. REV. 1447, 1504-10 (2012) (surveying various cognitive studies and concluding that “adolescents’ basic cognitive abilities are mature by the age of sixteen, giving them the capacity to process information and make rational decisions. But the heightened sensitivity to reward that increases and peaks around midadolescence inclines young people towards risk taking, sensation seeking, and impulsivity. These inclinations may dominate or overwhelm their cognitive

Voting requires “cold” cognition.³¹ It occurs on a certain, known date, so individuals can take the time to learn about the candidates and issues in advance. There is typically little emotion or stress involved. Although there may be peer pressure to support a particular candidate, peer pressure is not a concern when individuals actually vote because of the secret ballot. As one psychologist notes, “[a]dolescents may make bad choices [in voting], but statistically speaking, they won’t make them any more often than adults.”³² In one study, sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds scored about the same as older adults on measures of political tolerance, skill, efficacy, and interest.³³

Thus, nothing magical happens, from a psychological or cognitive standpoint, when someone turns eighteen. But something magical *does* occur by age sixteen, because by that time individuals have gained the cognitive capabilities to engage in measured, reasoned decisionmaking. This fact is probably why, as mentioned earlier, we allow sixteen-year-olds to drive, work in part-time jobs, consent to sexual activity, and drop-out of school (in many states). If we already treat these young people like “adults” in these settings—because we believe they are cognitively mature enough to make these decisions—then there is little reason why we should not also extend to them the right to vote.

Some might protest that, because of their young age and because most youth are still living with their parents, granting voting rights to sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds is tantamount to giving their parents an extra vote. In other words, parents could unduly influence, or even require, their children to vote in a certain way. Yet this was the same specious argument that many people used in opposing the Nineteenth Amendment’s extension of the right to vote to women: that wives would simply follow their husbands at the voting booth.³⁴ Not only is that argument itself insulting, it is simply not true. Married women have never blindly adhered to how their husbands want them

processes and shape their behaviors, especially in situations triggering heightened emotion or pressure”). Some psychologists, however, have questioned whether age is the driving force behind poor decisionmaking among youth—instead suggesting that socioeconomic inequalities may be the more important factor. See generally Mike Males, *Age, Poverty, Homicide, and Gun Homicide: Is Young Age or Poverty Level the Key Issue?* SAGE OPEN (Mar. 5, 2015), <http://sgo.sagepub.com/content/spsgo/5/1/2158244015573359.full.pdf> [<https://perma.cc/KLG7-GRUW>] (noting that some studies of youth behavior fail to control for socioeconomic status).

³¹ Steinberg, *supra* note 26.

³² *Id.*

³³ Daniel Hart & Robert Atkins, *American Sixteen- and Seventeen-Year-Olds Are Ready to Vote*, 633 ANNALS AM. ACAD. POL. & SOC. SCI. 201, 212-13 (2011).

³⁴ See Eleanor Barkhorn, “Vote No on Women’s Suffrage”: Bizarre Reasons for Not Letting Women Vote, ATLANTIC (Nov. 6, 2012), <http://www.theatlantic.com/sexes/archive/2012/11/vote-no-on-womens-suffrage-bizarre-reasons-for-not-letting-women-vote/264639/> [<https://perma.cc/HQU9-8E8E>] (presenting a pamphlet from 1910 that argued women should not be allowed to vote because “80% of the women eligible to vote are married and can only double or annul their husband’s votes”).

to vote.³⁵ Moreover, in places that have lowered the voting age, such as Scotland, studies show that young individuals do not just follow their parents. For instance, one survey leading up to the Scottish independence vote of 2014 found that only about half of sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds planned to vote in the same way as their parents.³⁶ The fact that young voters generally hold different political views from older generations³⁷ suggests that many sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds will vote independently of their parents' political beliefs and irrespective of whether they are still living at home.

In sum, psychological studies, as well as prior experience in places that have tried it, support lowering the voting age to sixteen. This reform also comports with an understanding of democracy that favors a broader electorate with a higher turnout rate.

CONCLUSION

This Essay has not yet addressed the elephant in the room (pun intended): politics. The conventional wisdom is that younger voters will skew the electorate to the left, as young people tend to support Democrats.³⁸ Of course, there is no guarantee that sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds will always vote for Democrats. We simply do not know, *ex ante*, who might benefit from this reform. Further, an expanded electorate gives all political parties the opportunity to recruit new members at an early age. In any event, the ideal of an expanded electorate and higher turnout should outweigh any political concerns. There is a strong moral claim that democracy is better when more people participate.³⁹ That said, nothing I can write here will convince those who will look at this issue *purely* through a partisan lens that lowering the voting age will necessarily help or hurt one side or the other.

³⁵ Cf. Alex Wagner, *Marriage After Trump*, ATLANTIC (Oct. 18, 2016), <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/10/marriage-after-trump/504440/> [<https://perma.cc/QW3F-LRT8>] (noting that married couples are increasingly voting for different presidential candidates).

³⁶ Emma Langman, *Scottish Independence: Research Finds Young Voters 'Don't Copy Parents'*, BBC SCOTLAND NEWS (Mar. 4, 2014), <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-26265299> [<https://perma.cc/E9MG-XFJV>].

³⁷ See, e.g., *Young People and Political Engagement*, PEW RES. CTR. (July 16, 2012), <http://www.pewresearch.org/2012/07/16/ask-the-expert-young-people-and-political-engagement/> [<https://perma.cc/22DN-VBDQ>] (finding that "[t]here was a 34 percentage point difference in 2008 between how 18-to-29-year-olds voted and how 65-and-overs voted").

³⁸ For instance, in the 2012 Presidential Election, 60% of voters aged 18–29 voted for Democratic nominee President Barack Obama, compared to 37% who voted for Republican nominee Governor Mitt Romney. *How Groups Voted in 2012*, ROPER CTR., <http://ropercenter.com/edu/polls/us-elections/how-groups-voted/how-groups-voted-2012/> [<https://perma.cc/592C-FBSK>].

³⁹ See, e.g., Hamilton, *supra* note 30, at 1479 (arguing "that a democratic government derives its authority from the individuals governed by it," which "presumptively entitles the[se] individual[s] to participate in the governance of a democratic system" by, for instance, voting); see also Douglas, *supra* note 13 (discussing the benefits of expanding the electorate in local elections).

But the legal and policy arguments, separate from politics, are strong. Eighteen is the current voting age largely through historical accident. Sixteen makes more sense from both legal and psychological perspectives. We impose legal obligations on sixteen-year-olds through driving rules and tax obligations, and most states' laws evince a belief that these young individuals are mature enough to consent to sexual activity and drop-out of school. Psychologically, sixteen-year-olds are no different from older individuals in making the reasoned decisions required of voting. We should allow them to participate in our democratic system.

The benefits of lowering the voting age to sixteen are myriad. Lowering the voting age will likely increase turnout, perhaps for years to come. It will give young people, who are engaged already in their local communities, a political voice. This voice, in turn, will force politicians to pay greater attention to the views and needs of younger individuals, who, after all, will have to live with the consequences of policy decisions for much longer than older voters.

Bringing people into the political system earlier in their lives will have tangible future benefits. If the right to vote is our most precious, fundamental right, then we should extend it to anyone who is competent enough to make democratic decisions and has a sufficient, actual stake in the outcome. We have already begun this reform at the municipal level by lowering the voting age in a few places for local or school-board elections. The policy should now trickle out to other cities, and once normalized, can influence statewide and national voting rules. For all of these reasons, cities, and eventually states, should lower the voting age to sixteen.

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Parkland students show why 16-year-olds should be able to vote

By Joshua Douglas

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Editor's Note: Joshua A. Douglas is a law professor at the University of Kentucky College of Law who specializes in election law, voting rights and constitutional law. He is the co-editor of "[Election Law Stories](#)" and is currently writing a new book on positive voting rights enhancements. Follow him on Twitter [@JoshuaADouglas](#). The opinions expressed are his own.

(CNN) The real adults in the room are the youth from Parkland, Florida, who are speaking out about the need for meaningful gun control laws. They are proving that civic engagement among young people can make a difference. The ironic part? They can't even vote yet.

Several municipalities in the United States allow 16- and 17-year-olds to vote in local elections. Takoma Park, Maryland, was the first city to lower the voting age, thanks mostly to the advocacy efforts of youth themselves who convinced the city council that they should have a voice in local governance. Other cities in Maryland, like Hyattsville and Greenbelt, have followed suit. Larger cities are also debating the measure: In 2016, Berkeley, California, voters agreed to lower the voting age to 16 for school board elections, while a ballot proposition in San Francisco to lower the voting age for all city elections narrowly lost. Advocates are likely to try again in San Francisco in 2020.

Lowering the voting age has the potential to increase turnout significantly. One of the biggest predictors of whether someone will vote is if they voted previously. Yet turning 18 is a tough time to expect young people to start the habit of voting. They are usually leaving home for school or the workforce, and they must navigate the hurdles of registering and requesting an absentee ballot if they are not at home. By contrast, more youth are likely to vote if they start the habit earlier, when they are in the supportive environment of school and home, especially if we also improve civics education. They will then continue that habit later in life.

What does this have to do with Parkland, Florida, and the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting? In the aftermath, survivors of the tragedy have spoken out loudly against politicians' refusal to pass meaningful gun control reform. They have quite literally kept the issue at the forefront of a nationwide debate, refusing to allow legislators to offer "thoughts and prayers" and nothing more. By engaging in respectful and forceful advocacy, these youth are proving how important it is to include young people's voices in political debate.

One of the most common arguments against lowering the voting age is that 16- and 17-year-olds are not mature enough to take on the responsibilities of choosing our elected officials. Studies of cognitive brain development prove otherwise, showing that brains are fully formed for "cold cognition," or reasoned, deliberate decision making, by age 16, which is the kind of thinking needed for voting.

The Parkland teenagers are proving this point. The young advocates from Stoneman Douglas High are mostly 16 and 17 years old, and they are the ones most forcefully demanding change. They have started the #NeverAgain Movement, planning a national protest and walkout. They are calling out politicians like Donald Trump and Marco Rubio for their failure to support gun control laws and for their ties to the NRA. They are holding rallies. They are engaging the media, keeping national attention on the issue.

Yet they can't formally participate in our democracy through voting for a few more years.

The gunman, on the other hand, was 19. He was already eligible to vote. But of course reaching that age doesn't guarantee maturity.

To be sure, lowering the voting age is a complex issue, but it is not unprecedented. In addition to the US cities mentioned above, several countries, like Austria and Scotland, let 16- and 17-year-olds vote.

And it seems likely that the United Kingdom will pass the reform in the near future.

Youth aged 16 and 17 were particularly engaged in the Scottish Independence referendum in 2014, causing politicians across the country to support lowering the voting age for all future elections.

These experiences show that lowering the voting age, coupled with better civics education, can energize a whole new generation of smart civic leaders. Perhaps it is best to start with more US cities and then let the movement spread. But the movement is ongoing.

Unfortunately, a tragedy happened, but the response at Stoneman Douglas High is showing that youth in this country can and should have a significant role in political debate. The students are fed up with our politicians and are using their voices to demand change.

Now imagine if they could also vote and turned out in significant numbers. Would meaningful gun reform legislation be more likely to pass? Would our politicians actually be more responsive to the public will?

No one should have to witness the horrors that these students experienced. Our schools must be safe places for all. Out of necessity, the surviving students from

Stoneman Douglas High are leading the path to that ideal. We should include them more directly in our democratic process.

Available at: <https://www.cnn.com/2018/02/19/opinions/parkland-shooting-voting-age-opinion-douglas/index.html>

June 25th 2018
Testimony to DC Council

Vote 16 DC!!!!

~~~~~

MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL, Thank you for providing this opportunity to testify in support of Vote16DC.

I want to make note of the pace at which all social justice issues are being ravaged by the politics of the Oligarchs ruling this world. The 1%. Chaos and destruction are evident everywhere and occurring at a pace as rapid as the technology that leaves many older folks like me befuddled.

16 year olds aren't befuddled by the technology, neither are they unaware of their rapidly deteriorating hopes for happy futures as issue after issue seems to get worse.

It is time for them to dig in and get to work!!!

They WANT to dig in and get to work!!!

We all NEED to dig in and get to work!!!

For the sake of all of us, LET them dig in and use the vote!!!

They have the incentive and they can use the technical tools many of us cannot.

**GIVE THEM THE VOTE!**

Thank you very much.

George Ripley

1425 Monroe St NW  
Ward 1

202-491-8451

**From:** Peter Orvetti [REDACTED]

**Sent:** Thursday, June 28, 2018 1:06 AM

**To:** Mitchell, Katherine (Council) <kmitchell@DCCOUNCIL.US>; Weil, Sonia (Council) <sweil@DCCOUNCIL.US>; Whitfield, Kevin (Council) <KWHitfield@DCCOUNCIL.US>; Nadeau, Brianne K. (Council) <BNadeau@DCCOUNCIL.US>; Cheh, Mary (COUNCIL) <MCheh@DCCOUNCIL.US>; Allen, Charles (Council) <CAllen@DCCOUNCIL.US>; Bonds, Anita (Council) <ABonds@DCCOUNCIL.US>; Gray, Vincent (Council) <vgray@DCCOUNCIL.US>; Grosso, David (Council) <dgrosso@DCCOUNCIL.US>

**Subject:** Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018

Dear Councilmembers,

I was scheduled to testify Wednesday in support of the Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018. Unfortunately I had to leave the hearing before my assigned time, but I was thrilled to see so many articulate young people speaking up for their right to vote.

I do want to summarize what I would have said. I am a 16-year resident of Ward One, and the father of twin 13-year-old boys who are District natives. There is no ideal arbitrary minimum age for voting. There are 13-year-olds -- and I count my sons among them -- who would make informed and conscientious voters, and there are 50-year-olds who will never take the responsibility seriously. But since there must be a minimum age, 16 would be far preferable to 18.

Many 16-year-olds are employed and are taxpayers, which is of particular note in the District, where we know the meaning of "taxation without representation". Nationwide, their annual tax contribution is nearly \$1 billion. Sixteen-year-olds are regularly treated as adults for purposes of prosecution, with approximately 250,000 people under age 18 tried as adults each year.

Young people are also politically active. We have seen this in the bravery of Parkland survivors like David Hogg, who is still 17, and in the many young District residents who have turned out at various protests over the past year and a half. On election days, we see young people canvassing at the polls. The Supreme Court has affirmed the right of those under 18 to donate to political candidates.

The experience of other jurisdictions shows that young people make good voters. In 2013, when Takoma Park lowered its voting age to 16, four times as many voters under 18 turned out as did voters over 18. Hyattsville has seen similarly strong turnout among newly enfranchised young voters. Given the dismally low turnout in our own contested primaries this month, this is of particular significance.

There is also little evidence to indicate that young people would simply mirror their parents' votes. Exit polls in nations with lower voting ages show this to not be the case. I have told my own sons that I would rather they back candidates or policies I oppose, and be able to defend their positions, than to adopt the same stances I have. Many parents would feel the same way.

Towns and cities in our region have been trailblazers in delivering the franchise to young residents. I urge the District to follow their example.

**June 27, 2018**

Testimony of Ellen Middaugh, Ph.D.  
on B22-0778, the Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018  
Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety  
Chairman Charles Allen

As an expert in youth civic development, I have spent the last 15 years examining adolescent and young adults' understanding of political issues and the factors that predict informed, effective civic and political engagement. Based on this experience, I believe the research suggests that 16-year-olds are cognitively ready to vote and that allowing youth to vote at this age will support their long-term engagement in electoral politics.

**Unlike many activities, voting plays to 16-year-olds' cognitive strengths.**

Research suggests that cognitive development continues until age 25. Ongoing development in the prefrontal cortex, which supports impulse control, gut decision-making and coordination of emotion and reason, can present challenges in scenarios that require quick processing (e.g., driving), balance of reason with social rewards (e.g., peers are present) or resisting immediate rewards for long term gain (e.g., giving up video game play to study).<sup>i</sup> However, voting is done alone and confidentially with ample time to prepare. This context plays to adolescents' cognitive strengths.

Lab studies suggest that adolescents' attention, memory and logical reasoning reach adult proficiency by age 15. Studies also suggest that in the absence of pressure to make quick decisions or direct social pressure, adolescents reason about a range of issues (even complex issues such as abortion) at an adult level by age 16.<sup>ii</sup> While lab studies are sometimes critiqued because they are not similar to the real-life context of making decisions, in this case, the lab environment in which a young person is given the opportunity to think carefully with minimal distraction is a good match for the task of voting. From the standpoint of neurological development, there is little reason to believe that 16-year-olds would not have the same reasoning capacity as adults to make decisions in the voting booth.

Beyond cognitive capacity, there is also the question of expertise and access to information. National polls assessing adult voter knowledge routinely surface concerns, such as the 2016 Annenberg Public Policy Center Poll which found that 31% of adult respondents could not name a single branch of government.<sup>iii</sup> In light of concerns over fake news, a recent study conducted by Pew found that adults routinely misclassified political opinion statements as facts.<sup>iv</sup> While adolescents are also likely to vary in their level of knowledge and ability to assess news, unlike the majority of their adult counterparts, most are in school and being

actively educated about the structure of government and how to conduct research. This creates conditions for their first vote to be an informed vote.

**Mid-adolescence provides a window of opportunity for civic identity development--opportunities to participate now play a role in whether youth become invested or alienated.**

Due to rapid brain growth and social changes, adolescence is described as an “age of opportunity”.<sup>v</sup> Gains are made in abstract thinking, perspective taking and logical reasoning, particularly if youth are given the right stimuli. People become interested in abstract concepts and question injustices during this age. Youth actively explore their identities and ask who they will be as friends, workers, family members, and citizens.<sup>vi</sup> However, this period does not last forever. Cognitive patterns solidify and social decisions are made.

Research suggests orientations toward political engagement are highly susceptible to influence in early adolescence and stabilize during middle adolescence.<sup>vii</sup> While attitudes toward political participation can change later in life, mid-adolescence appears to be an optimal period for integrating political participation into a person’s identity. In line with this, research as repeatedly found relationships between opportunities for community involvement in high school and adult civic and political participation.<sup>viii</sup>

More research will need to be done in countries where the voting age has recently been lowered to determine the long-term impact, but it is noteworthy that during the time attitudes are beginning to stabilize, electoral activities are the only civic activities closed off to youth. While there is some evidence that youth who become involved in community service during adolescence are more likely to be involved in a variety of ways later in adulthood, including electoral politics<sup>ix</sup>, there are also concerns about youth avoidance of electoral politics in favor of other forms of expression, such as consumer activism.<sup>x</sup> Being invited to participate in electoral politics at the same time that civic identity is consolidating may help to counter cynicism.

**Non-college youth vote at much lower rates—voting during high school can provide institutional support for forming the habit of voting.**

Educational attainment is a persistent predictor of voter turnout. In the 2008 and 2012 Presidential elections, 55-62% of college educated youth voted compared to 28-36% of non-college youth, and the trend toward lower representation of non-college youth continued into 2016.<sup>xi</sup> While there are many reasons why education facilitates voting, it is noteworthy that colleges serve as an institution through which youth can be informed and mobilized at the time of their first election. Voter registration drives target campuses, professors may offer extra credit for watching or attending debates, etc. Having a greater number of youth becoming eligible to vote before they are on the cusp of graduating from high school will increase the likelihood that their first opportunity to vote in an election will take place when they have (non-partisan)

institutional support to vote in the form of access to voter registration, reminders and encouragement to vote. While this will not remove all of the barriers to voting for non-college youth, it does potentially create conditions for establishing a habit.

Sincerely,



Ellen Middaugh, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Child and Adolescent Development  
San José State University

6/27/18  
Date

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<sup>i</sup>Steinberg, L. (2014) "The science of adolescent brain development and its implications for adolescent rights and responsibilities" in J. Bhaba (Ed). *Human Rights and Adolescence*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

<sup>ii</sup> Ibid

<sup>iii</sup> Annenberg Public Policy Center (2016). Americans' Knowledge of the Branches of Government Is Declining. <https://www.annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org/americans-knowledge-of-the-branches-of-government-is-declining>.

<sup>iv</sup> Mitchell, A., Gottfried, J., Barthel, M. & Sumida, N. (2018) Distinguishing between factual and opinion statements in the news. <http://www.journalism.org/2018/06/18/distinguishing-between-factual-and-opinion-statements-in-the-news/>

<sup>v</sup> Steinberg, L. (2014). *Age of opportunity: Lessons from the new science of adolescence*. NY: Houghton Mifflin.

<sup>vi</sup> Youniss, J. & Yates, M. (1997). *Community Service & Social Responsibility in Youth*. Chicago: U of Chicago Press.

<sup>vii</sup> Eckstein, K., Noack, P. & Gniewosz, B. (2012). Attitudes toward political engagement and willingness to participate in politics: Trajectories throughout adolescence. *Journal of Adolescence*, v35(3): 485-95.

<sup>viii</sup> Barber, C., Mueller, C. & Ogata, S. (2013). Volunteerism as purpose: Examining the long-term predictors of continued community engagement. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 33(3): 314-33.; Hart D, Donnelly TM, Youniss J. & Atkins R. (2007). High school community service as a predictor of adult voting and volunteering. *Am Ed Res J*, 2007;44(1): 197-219; McFarland DA & Thomas RJ. Bowling young: How youth voluntary associations influence adult political participation. *Am Soc Rev*, 2006;71:400-425.

<sup>ix</sup> Ibid

<sup>x</sup> Fisher, D. (2012). Youth political participation: Bridging activism and electoral politics. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 38:119-37.

<sup>xi</sup> CIRCLE. (2013). The youth vote in 2012. Retrieved from [civicyouth.org](http://civicyouth.org); CIRCLE. (2016). More Young White Men, More College-Grads Among 2016 Youth Electorate. Retrieved from [civicyouth.org](http://civicyouth.org).

**Testimony on Bill 22-0778, the "Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018"**

**Delivered June 27, 2018**

**By Laura Fuchs, Teacher, WTU Executive Board**

My name is Laura Fuchs. I am a resident in Ward 5, I have been elected to serve on the Washington Teachers Union Executive Board and serve as the chair of the Committee on Political Education, I am also an elected member of the Executive Boards of Empower DC and the Ward 7 Education Council. Most importantly, I am a teacher for the past 11 years at HD Woodson HS in DC Public Schools.

As a high school social studies teacher I have the privilege of teaching history and government to the young DC citizens that attend HD Woodson. For 8 of those past 11 years I have been especially blessed to teach AP US Government to seniors. My students and the others I have worked with across the city have consistently impressed on me their love and interest in making the community a better place. There is no doubt in my mind that they are able and interested in voting, and that having that right extended to them will further increase their civic engagement and make our city a better place.

Despite not having the right to vote, my students have logged hundreds of hours campaigning throughout the Mid-Atlantic region for candidates they believed in. They have knocked on doors, phonebanked, registered voters and more. They have written hundreds of bills for the DC Youth and Government program where many then went on to present, defend and vote on other bills in committees with their peers. They have competed and won competitions on the US Constitution. They have written and presented speeches for Mikva Challenge's project Soapbox. They have created start-up non-profits in the Aspen Challenge. They have testified over and over again at the City Council, DC State Board of Education, and attended and spoken up at community meetings, town halls and every other opportunity that they have throughout this city in from of countless government officials.

The idea that these same young people could then also vote then and there fills me with joy and pride because it will add even more power to their engagement and activism by having a direct say on the leaders they then appeal to. This bill will truly make the elected leaders accountable to them.

I know that other teachers throughout the WTU fell the same way. We are proud of our students and happy to support their efforts to gain the right to vote in DC.

**From:** Lauren G.  
**To:** Allen, Charles (Council); Johnson, Dare (Council); Cheh, Mary (COUNCIL); Bonds, Anita (Council); Gray, Vincent (Council); Grosso, David (Council)  
**Cc:** Judiciary (Council)  
**Subject:** Written Testimony for B22-0778 Youth Vote Amendment Act Of 2018  
**Date:** Thursday, July 5, 2018 12:19:02 PM

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Dear Councilmembers Allen, Cheh, Bonds, Gray, Grosso and the Committee on the Judiciary and Pubile Safety:

I am writing as a concerned citizen that is in full support of B22-0778 Youth Vote Amendment Act Of 2018. I believe that 16- and 17-year-old Washington D.C. youth are well equipped to actively participate in the voting process and that they deserve the right to do so. In my time working with local youth, especially those from some of the most underserved communities in the District, I have encountered countless youth that are adept at researching and comprehending various social, economic, and political topics and points of view. In turn, they are able to determine their own viewpoints and defend them with more than just anecdotes they're heard from other sources. The youth are ready to join the ranks of us current D.C. voters. I would certainly welcome them.

I encourage you to vote for B22-0778 Youth Vote Amendment Act Of 2018. Thank you.

Best,  
Lauren Grimes



Testimony of Sterling K. Speirn -- July 28, 2018

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these remarks in writing, after attending the public hearing yesterday hosted by Committee Chairman Charles Allen.

My name is Sterling Speirn. I live in Ward 1. I am 70 years old. I serve on the Board of Directors of the Greater Washington Community Foundation and until recently served on the Board of the DC Promise Neighborhood in Ward 7.

I offer these brief remarks, as a relative newcomer to the District, in support of the Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018.

While I speak as an individual constituent today, my professional work as CEO of the National Conference on Citizenship makes it my job to be constantly looking throughout our country for civic innovations that promote and foster active citizenship. And it is inspiring to see, right here in my new backyard, a truly remarkable and profoundly democratic idea to stimulate civic life in the District of Columbia.

While listening to several hours of oral testimony presented yesterday to the Council (June 27, 2018), I heard many very powerful arguments and rationales for passing this Act. I would like to underscore how this act addresses two related issues: for our young people, the path to adulthood, and for our community and nation, the path to civic and racial equity.

For the first path, by extending to our 16 and 17 year olds the franchise, we not only create a *right* to vote, we instill a *will* to vote, and a lifelong *appetite* for voice and civic participation. While the act of voting itself is infrequent and episodic, it is the portal through which young people pass into the daily work of civic engagement, of thinking outside the ballot box and leaning into the everyday opportunities of public work that our democracy in this city-state (non state) thrives on. Early habits shape our very identities, our sense of membership, our sense of dignity and agency, and our essential sense of connectedness to our community.

And our young people should know that they would be joining what is in many ways an exemplary democracy. When NCoC in partnership with local government produced DC's Civic Health Index in 2014, positive findings based on U.S. Census data noted we had the highest voter turnout in the 2012 presidential election, along with national rankings of 1<sup>st</sup> in discussion of political issues, 4<sup>th</sup> in boycotting products due to social causes and 4<sup>th</sup> in contact with governmental officials. A copy of the 2014 DC Civic Health Index is attached.

In turning to the second path, the path to civic and racial equity, here we must confront challenges. From a Brookings Institution report on American education released just today, the good news is that our students are among those in only nine other states that mandate a full year of civics in high school. The bad news is that since 1998, disparities in civics scores between white or affluent students and their black or poor classmates have grown. What gives us hope is the prospect that in tandem with DCPS schools, teachers, students and their parents, the Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018 could give a tremendous boost to civic empowerment and advance new paths towards racial equity in our city.

Earlier this year, in collaboration with our colleagues at PACE: Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement, we issued a working paper on "Recommendations for Exploring Civic Learning as a Pathway to Equity and Opportunity" which explores this issue in greater detail. I attach a copy of this report to these remarks.

Let me close by again thanking members of the Council for their leadership and for helping create an ethic and a culture in our city that Professor Donald Kagan, a noted historian of ancient Greece, captured in these words:

"Pericles knew that any successful society must be an educational institution. However great its commitment to individual freedom and diversity, it needs a code of civic virtue and a general devotion to the common enterprises without which it cannot flourish or survive. It must transmit its understanding of good and bad and a sense of pride, admiration, and love for its institutions and value to its citizens, especially the young."

Thank you.

# **Recommendations for Exploring Civic Learning as a Pathway to Equity and Opportunity**

*A collaboration between National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC) and Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement (PACE)*

*Released January 17, 2018*

➤ *Updated April 18, 2018*



**National Conference on Citizenship**



## Introduction

The National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC) and Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement (PACE) have undertaken a collaborative exploration to understand the potential of civic learning as a tool to equip communities in addressing the challenges and divisions they face. The goal of this exploration is to see if and how we might:

- open a dialogue about how to reimagine, re-incorporate, and maximize the potential of civics during this divisive time,
- enable communities to build an inclusive foundation of engaged citizens, and
- embrace and position civic learning as part of a solutions set to address challenges, particularly social inequities and a lack of opportunity and support for young people to exercise their civic rights and responsibilities.

This exploration seeks to expand the dialogue around civic learning as a means to promote equity and opportunity by complementing the important work already being done to build civic knowledge and skills in their own right. Our aim with this work is to encourage schools and educational institutions to engage with their communities around issues of inequity and lack of opportunity. In doing so, we suggest considering broad forms of civic learning that can take place in both school and community-based contexts.

This paper outlines key recommendations generated from our exploration so far, incorporating diverse input from individual interviews with field leaders as well as a salon session at the 2017 Annual National Conference on Citizenship (see appendix). These recommendations include:

1. Expanding the picture of who is a civic educator and who needs civic learning;
2. Utilizing civic learning as a tool to increase understanding and engagement across lines of difference, while ensuring a shared foundation of knowledge about history;
3. Ensuring civic readiness is a critical component of the college and career preparation pipeline; and
4. Supporting cross-sector collaboration to advance civic learning. Ensuring it is not just the responsibility of our education system, but of the entire community, to prepare young people for their roles in enhancing civic life toward the goal of improving the civic health of their communities.

This paper, originally released for discussion purposes in January 2018, seeks to describe each recommendation and visions for what it might look like to achieve it. These recommendations subsequently informed a March 2018 working session, which discussed the recommendations and began considering possible strategies for implementation by philanthropy and other leaders who recognize the value and potential of civic learning as a pathway to equity and opportunity.

In this revised edition of the paper, we have we have incorporated key themes and feedback from the working session into the original discussion paper. These revisions include opportunities for the field to explore this intersection further; updated sections are denoted with this arrow: ➤.

In this effort, we are placing an emphasis on young people (those in childhood through early adulthood), though there is value in considering these concepts across all stages of life. We hope this paper sparks a conversation among our colleagues.

## Working Definitions and Vision Statements

There are a multitude of ways to approach, define, and frame this conversation from both a values and process orientation. For the purposes of this effort, we offer some working frames to guide our exploration, establish a common understanding of our language, and promote understanding among diverse audiences. We hope they will offer resonance or a new level of understanding, especially for those who seek to become involved in these conversations and practice but may not already be immersed in this space.

Working Process Definitions (the strategies/approaches we are seeking to explore):

- **Civic Learning:** the range of experiences that prepare people for informed and engaged participation in civic life and the democratic process (which can occur in classrooms or in out-of-school contexts, and at all stages of life).
- **Pathway:** a series of opportunities that facilitate a person's journey toward achieving successful outcomes.
- **Civic Life:** a life in which civic engagement activities have an important value to and for individuals. For a community, civic life is the culmination of all the acts of civic engagement and associated norms and values of its members.
- **Civic Health:** the manner in which communities organize to define and address public problems.

Working Vision Statements (what we're hoping to achieve through those strategies/approaches):

- **Equality:** fair and impartial treatment of all people
- **Opportunity:** the ability to positively influence one's economic and social mobility
- **Equity:** equality and opportunity fully realized

These concepts are distinct but closely related, and it is important to understand how they build on each other. For those that may be new to the space, here's a metaphor that may be helpful: Equality might be thought of as ensuring a level playing field to which everyone has access. Opportunity ensures that when you're on the field, you can play according to your skills and ability, and can become stronger through hard work over time. Equity is ensuring that your outcomes aren't determined before you walk onto the field due to biased, discriminatory, or rigged systems.

During the working session in March 2018, we received some feedback that prompted us to highlight a few considerations more deeply, specifically regarding language and the role of race.

### ➤ A Shared Understanding of Language

While the definitions and vision statements provided offered a foundation to the recommendations, we heard that continued refinement and attention to language will be necessary in order to achieve a shared understanding of this work. We need to be even more clear about definitions of terms, make sure concepts are well articulated, and specifically name issues that might otherwise be open to varied interpretation. Additionally, some of the terms used in the recommendations have political and historical meanings which may convey different values to different audiences or result in varied interpretations. Race, power, and privilege are complex and challenging topics, which makes it all the more important to be clear and avoid coded language in discussions centering on these issues.

## ➤ The Role of Race and Racial Equity

We heard that conversations about equity and opportunity cannot be meaningfully advanced without acknowledging racial identity and experience, including how inequities along racial lines contribute to disparities in education and other systems. In order to overcome the inequities that impact the civic development of young people, systemic barriers rooted in racial inequality must be acknowledged and addressed.

Race is not only important when thinking about how civic learning can become a pathway to equity and opportunity, but also when looking around the room at who is a part of these discussions. Maintaining a focus on race equity requires intentionality in diversifying the voices and perspectives represented, as well as a willingness to disrupt the norms of existing power structures and exclusivity. How to achieve these efforts effectively and in partnership requires further consideration.

### Recommendations for Discussion

#### **Recommendation #1: Expand the picture of who is a civic educator and who needs civic learning.**

Civic learning is an effort to teach individuals about their ability--and responsibility--to positively influence the conditions in which they live and work. Building on traditional civic education (primarily in the classroom or online), civic learning should incorporate an intentional, community-wide approach welcoming all ages and sectors with an emphasis on ensuring that all young people develop an understanding of their individual and collective ability to positively impact their communities.

This sense of individual and collective responsibility can be fostered across educational experiences (both in school and out of school) and viewed as an interdisciplinary activity rather than a single class subject. Current methods of civic learning are often limited to traditional social studies classes, creating the presumption that only designated educators can teach civics, whereas science or math educators (as well as community leaders) can also educate around civics. Civic learning can be a bridge between academic concepts and life experiences; this can empower young people to understand the conditions in which they live and work, understand their responsibilities, and positively influence their circumstances and those of their community.

Parents are also civic learners and educators who can acknowledge youth, draw them into civic structures, particularly outside of classrooms, and enhance their own understanding of new forms of civic learning such as digital engagement. Today, many adults also lack civic knowledge, skills and dispositions. Creating a culture of civic learning that spans ages and generations can make civic learning ubiquitous--not limited to school settings, not limited to certain classes or courses, and also, not limited to young people.

What it could look like to achieve this vision:

- **Equality:** Civic learning is embraced as a multidisciplinary and multigenerational experience that fosters individual and collective responsibility to improve the civic health of communities.

- **Opportunity:** Civic learning curriculum, programs, and initiatives (in school and out of school) highlight opportunities to improve individual conditions as well as those of peers and community members.
- **Equity:** Measurements or indicators are utilized to understand how all individuals are equipped with civic knowledge and skills, and ensure outcomes against those indicators are proportionate to that community's demographics.

➤ **Strategies identified at the March 2018 working session:**

- We can be more inclusive in our orientation about who is (and who can be) a civic leader by:
  - avoiding inequities in attention and support of students along lines of privilege
  - intentionally addressing the issue of representation in civic education: if young people don't have access to to civic educators they can connect with, and activities they can find identity in, they will find it elsewhere--online, for example (which raises the issue of digital citizenship and literacy)
- Alternative education and workforce development programs are promising places to focus civic learning efforts, especially in reaching Opportunity Youth (those disconnected from both school and work). In addition, these programs and afterschool programs can explore more creative approaches to teaching and learning such as role playing, encouraging civic imagination and courage, and others which can enable young people to embody civic leadership.
- Encourage schools to use democratic approaches to solving their own challenges, and let students' voices be heard in the process (examples may include participatory budgeting and democratic decision making); also encourage teachers to lift up and integrate civic skills in the classroom.

**Recommendation #2: Utilize civic learning as a tool to increase understanding and engagement across lines of difference, while ensuring a shared foundation of knowledge about history.**

Civic learning can offer a way for young people to develop and articulate their opinions and ground them in an understanding and shared knowledge of America's history. Educators (broadly defined, per recommendation 1 above) can recognize that individual experiences have been different and help students develop the knowledge and skills to "seek first to understand." By learning about history, students can contribute to developing solutions to public problems, contextualized by the longstanding challenges their communities and peers may have faced. The civic learning environment can also welcome participants' complex and varied social identities, acknowledge difference, and navigate controversial issues in ways that lead to productive and constructive dialogue.

In order to facilitate engagement across lines of difference and foster this meaningful civic dialogue, teachers (including experiential learning educators and community leaders) must help young people explore their civic identities, learn their civic responsibilities, and formulate their viewpoints. In doing so, educators may bring their perspectives and other points of view as well as lived experiences into classrooms and projects in order to model engagement for students and ensure facilitation is as comprehensive, neutral, and objective as possible. Furthermore, in order for students to feel heard, these educators need support to foster affirming and inclusive spaces for dialogue that encourage

conversations about civic issues and students' lived experiences. This could include professional development for teachers, and training and leadership development for experiential learning educators and community leaders.

What it could look like to achieve this vision:

- **Equality:** Civic educators foster a learning environment where students develop a shared basis of knowledge about history, feel equally heard and valued, and are equally empowered to ask difficult questions.
- **Opportunity:** Civic educators, without assumptions of bias or undue influence, engage their students in civic dialogue across lines of difference and students grow in confidence and willingness to constructively engage with each other.
- **Equity:** Civic educators have equal access to the resources and administrative support needed to equip all young people with shared knowledge and skills to navigate controversial issues. Therein, young people possess an increased sense of agency and familiarity engaging in this way, and tools to understand and measure that agency are utilized.

➤ Strategies identified at the March 2018 working session:

- Engage parents with community, teachers, and students in early education through tools such as interactive and television channels and early childhood programs focused on reading skill development to increase understanding across difference and teach history in more engaging ways.
- Employ practices that center young people, with a focus on social and emotional learning, youth media, constructive and civil dialogue, participatory research, and youth organizing as civic learning practices that promote engagement and appreciation of difference.
- Ensure that every community offers opportunities for civic learning for young people. Every classroom is a community where people co-create the rules of engagement. Civic learning can also engage youth and take place through other community institutions such as libraries, museums, and historical sites.

**Recommendation #3: Ensure civic readiness is a critical component in the college and career preparation pipeline.**

Preparation pipelines for young people often center on a goal of “college and career readiness.” We suggest “civic readiness” is another dimension of preparation that should be integral to that pipeline--that is, a preparation to engage in civic and democratic processes. Civic readiness can be integrated with existing ways of teaching, learning, and outcomes that are already central to college and career dimensions of readiness; all three would likely be reinforced by one another. Civic readiness is critical to giving young people a pathway to opportunity, and to make their voices heard, but it requires a cultural shift in our approach to preparation. An individual's circumstances should not limit their ability to succeed and should not be a pre-determinant of their college, career, or civic future. By integrating civic readiness into the preparation pipeline, young people can have a better chance at improving their socioeconomic position.



What it could look like to achieve this vision:

- **Equality:** The readiness system fully articulates how it will prepare all individuals equally for college, career, and civic life.
- **Opportunity:** The preparation pipeline is redefined to include civic readiness and increases opportunities for individuals to achieve social and economic mobility through active engagement in civic life.
- **Equity:** Measures and indicators of civic readiness are utilized and integrated into existing pipelines with the goal of ensuring overall outcomes are representative of the community; not disproportionate based on race, gender, ethnicity, or other demographics.

➤ Strategies identified at the March 2018 working session:

- Integrate civic learning across disciplines (acknowledging it is a challenge due to standardized curriculum, as acknowledged in another recommendation) and institutionalize democratic practices by developing democratic, democracy-centered schools.
- Provide young people with the skills they will need for life (social/emotional learning) that crosses curriculum and age groups to bridge and align their college, career and civic readiness preparation.
- Utilize models of youth development such as mentoring, youth sports, and re-entry programs that engage the people most affected. A system-wide approach is worth consideration because youth development models cannot be one-off activities, but rather must be part of a broader system that is focused on youth development.
- Acknowledge that approaches to learning are as important as the strategy/tactic used to achieve them. The approach must create a sense of community and purpose as well as help students see where they fit in.

**Recommendation #4: Support cross-sector collaboration to advance civic learning. Ensure it is not just the responsibility of our education system, but of the entire community, to prepare young people for their roles in enhancing civic life toward the goal of improving the civic health of their communities.**

Civic learning is maximized when it is a shared student and community experience, with schools and community organizations both acting as facilitators. Civic learning is often viewed as taking place strictly within formal classrooms; however, all aspects of community including family, school, workplaces, and faith-based organizations can embrace their role of positively engaging (or re-engaging) young people and collaborate to prepare them for civic life. Cross-sector collaboration can take the shape of public-private partnerships or other similar joint activities to promote and foster civic learning through nonprofit, government, corporate and philanthropic efforts. Organizations and individuals from different industries and sectors can work together to:

- Create a culture of civic learning that is inherently equitable, in which high-quality civic learning is available and accessible to all young people, providing the tools and support to effect change in their communities.
- Bring people together where they are, and ensure civic learning curriculums and initiatives are culturally competent and inclusive. Meeting people where they are may mean convening in



places where they already gather and have built trusted community, and it can also mean engaging and programming in a way that speaks to their frame of lived experience.

- Promote an individual as well as collective sense of civic responsibility.
- Advance diversity and inclusion, as well as an intersectional lens that embraces a spectrum of social identities, including race, class, and gender.

What it might look like to achieve this vision:

- **Equality:** Every sector and institution identifies their role and articulates their commitment to fostering civic learning opportunities.
- **Opportunity:** Every sector and institution develops and implements plans to engage in and support community members in civic learning.
- **Equity:** Every sector and institution utilizes measurements or indicators to ensure that the practice and impact of their civic learning initiatives are representative of the people and community they serve.

➤ Strategies identified at the March 2018 working session:

- Develop a framework to facilitate shared understanding of these concepts across sectors that presents civic learning as a pathway to equity and opportunity, and incorporates the for-profit sector as well.
- Conduct local listening events to surface challenges to civic learning and solutions to address them, supported by cross-sector resources and training. These events will provide community insight on the need for civic learning, grounded in place, and develop agency for those in the community to tackle the issues.
- Develop and publish standardized return on investment measures for corporate and public sectors so that investors and businesses can have a means by which to judge their investments, as well as possibly bring new resources to the table.

➤ Overall Needs to Advance this Work, Individually and Collectively:

During the March working session, we heard there are several important considerations to keep in mind as we advance this work:

**Opportunities for Individual Organizations:**

- The organizations engaged in this effort are under-resourced both in terms of capacity and financial means to sustain this work. They desire support to:
  - raise awareness about equity issues
  - find new partners to expand their reach
  - demonstrate to students and families how civic learning is a pathway to opportunity
  - secure funding to support their work
- The community struggles with diversifying the leaders engaged in these efforts and forging new relationships. They need support in ensuring conversations are inclusive and connect people across differences such as class, race, and education level.

- Some respondents believe that the problem is well understood but that the community of civic educators, community leaders and philanthropy need help in setting priorities on which solutions and strategies to advance, whereas others felt that more frameworks and resources are needed to lead these conversations.
- Some respondents need additional support in accessing influencers, including media and institutional leadership, to advance these efforts and ensure young people's voices are heard.

#### **Opportunities for Our Field:**

- Improve systems and provide diverse programs that allow students both in school and in alternative programs equal opportunity to learn civics and engage in government.
- Promote community-based approaches that fulfill local needs and utilize organizational capacity to implement community strategies. Localizing efforts may also allow groups to select an issue to focus on together.
- Encourage working together across ideological divides to find opportunities for common ground and shared purpose.
- Foster broad interest in civics that supports individuals' ability to feel pride in and embrace ideals of active citizenship.
- Bridge the gap between nonprofits and for-profits, bringing people together around a common cause and deepening their understanding of civic learning as a pathway to equity and opportunity.

Additionally, in order to focus on equity and opportunity, it is necessary to broaden these discussions to include community-based partners such as alternative education providers, workforce development agencies, and community renewal organizations who represent young people that rarely, if ever, have access to "traditional" civic learning given disconnections or lack of access. While traditional in-school civic learning and civic educators are critical to reaching many students, this effort could benefit by broader thinking to recognize that citizens more generally have the opportunity to be civic educators outside of classrooms and that all young people can be recognized as civic learners.

#### **Conclusion**

This project aimed to advance a dialogue about what philanthropy and other leaders can do to support civic learning and investigate its potential as a pathway to equity and opportunity. Through these efforts, we surfaced both opportunities and challenges to advancing the recommendations outlined in this paper.

Throughout this exploration some salient themes emerged, including:

1. Civic learning can take place both in school and in the community (they are not mutually exclusive). Community partnerships, particularly through alternative education, workforce development, and after school or out of school time programs, offer a key opportunity to reach young people.

2. Democracy-centered schools and community-based programs create the environment and conditions necessary to promote civic learning. Democratic education systems are especially important to ensuring youth voices are heard when engaging in civic practices.
3. Social and emotional skills may be critical to civic learning and can be embedded within civic experiences and used as a bridge across age groups and disciplines.

The discussions also surfaced several challenges to be aware of, including:

- Language can pose challenges and obstacles to productive dialogue, in particular through the use of generalizations to avoid difficult topics; using "equity and opportunity" more generally for a conversation that is really about race specifically. Clarity of language and shared definitions of equity, opportunity, and related themes are needed to create a shared understanding of these recommendations and to promote understanding throughout future discussions.
- Also with regard to language: Further clarity on the specific scope and understanding of civic learning may enable people to see themselves in this broader picture--both as civic learners and educators. The current definition of civic learning is "a range of experiences" that prepare people for informed and engaged participation in civic life. But civic learning is not a range of experiences--rather it takes place *through* those experiences. Civic learning is the knowledge, skills, agency, and dispositions that take place through those experiences.
- There are limitations to including civics across disciplines due to the boundaries of standard school curriculums. Alternative education and workforce development programs may have the ability to more easily incorporate civic learning experiences and can serve as opportunities to reach young people in addition to school-based civic learning.
- Both in-school and out-of-school civic learning strategies face their own set of challenges, but maintaining a focus on race and race equity may present an additional challenge because of a potential tendency to "default" back to traditional civic learning approaches that may not intentionally include an equity lens.

We also recognize that some critical questions remain about how to approach this work, including:

1. How do we achieve a common and shared understanding of civic learning and who is, and who should be, a civic educator?
2. How do we stay focused on integrating an equity lens, rather than defaulting to known fundamentals of civic learning practice?
3. How do we encourage schools and educational institutions to build partnerships and become a part of community without reducing the importance of classroom civics?
4. If/how do we reconcile the view of civic learning as worthwhile in and of itself and as a tool to promote equity and opportunity? Does not reconciling this tension undermine the value or efforts of either approach?

We heard from the field that this can't be just a civic learning initiative, rather, it's also about reconciling feelings of "civic disjuncture." When students' lives reflect a different reality than the one they're presented with in school, even the best civic learning programs won't be able to reach them. We need to simultaneously address social inequities as we send a message to young people that their voice matters--so they can see that it does; that they matter, and that their voice has the power to create change. As this collaborative effort concludes, NCoC is committed to continuing to serve as the

repository of information gathered through this project and a potential convener of future conversations.

By expanding the picture of who is a civic educator and who needs civic learning; increasing understanding and engagement across lines of difference with a shared knowledge base grounded in historical contexts; development and integration of civic readiness into the college and career preparation pipeline; as well as cross-sector collaboration across the education system and community, we can strengthen the civic health of our communities now and in the future. We hope these recommendations invigorate further discussion and deeper thinking about what it could look like to achieve these visions of equality, opportunity, and equity for communities and to prepare all young people for active and engaged civic lives.

## Appendix (Review of process employed in the exploration to-date)

### Background

Since the release of their publication “Civic Pathways Out of Poverty and Into Opportunity” in 2010, PACE has been interested in the potential of civic engagement, service, and civic learning to foster greater opportunity for youth and young adults. PACE has long held the viewpoint that civic engagement is key to building and strengthening communities. PACE and its members have also recognized that civic learning is necessary to prepare young people with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions they need to become civically engaged. This ongoing body of work has led to the development of a civic learning primer and the undertaking of this collaborative project with NCoC to further unpack the potential of civic learning as a pathway.

The recommendations in this paper are offered after a series of discussions with field leaders, practitioners, funders, and community members, and PACE hopes they may inform continued discussions and activity; however, they do not necessarily represent the views, priorities, or endorsements of all PACE member institutions.

### Individual Interviews

Beginning in July 2017, NCoC and PACE launched this collaborative exploration by seeking partner input and recommendations for a field-wide discussion about civic learning as a pathway to equity and opportunity. Interviews were conducted with sixteen partner organizations representing civic learning advocates and practitioners as well as civic engagement researchers and leaders. The interview explored the central question “Can civic learning be a pathway to increased equity and opportunity for students, institutions, and communities?” and informed the vision statements for equity and opportunity as well as the discussion questions for a salon session at the NCoC Conference in October 2017.

### Recap of October 2017 “Exploring Civic Learning as a Pathway to Equity and Opportunity” Salon Session

The opening session of the 2017 National Conference on Citizenship kicked off with a reflection from Temple University student Maya Branch, about how her civic learning experiences empowered her to find her voice. Maya challenged the adults in the audience to think about what young people are capable of, how they are ready and willing to participate if given the opportunity and reminded us that our youth are not just the future; they are the present too. Maya set the stage for our panelists, Rebecca Burgess (American Enterprise Institute), Decker Ngongang (PACE), Verdis Robinson (The Democracy Commitment), and Robert Sainz (City of Los Angeles), to discuss how civic learning supports vibrant communities and makes engaging civic life possible. Whether civic education takes place in classrooms or through experiential learning programs, on community college campuses, or in political rallies and discussions, young people who positively engage in their communities shape their identities through civic experiences.

Systems and institutions can either reinforce inequities or foster greater opportunity. Our goal is to foster greater opportunity. It is up to us to create the conditions for young people to become active, engaged citizens by empowering and supporting them as well as giving them access to the skills, knowledge and opportunities to participate. In order for young people to understand and enact their individual civic rights and collective responsibilities, we must understand and embrace both their

individual and collective voices. While the panelists agreed civic learning is ripe with the potential to do this, the conversation also raised several challenges, including the role adults play in facilitating or sometimes hampering youth engagement, the polarized and inequitable environment in our education system, and a fear of being politically active during these divisive times.

In addition to the panel, we also heard from the audience about how to strengthen communities by enhancing civic learning both inside and outside of the classroom. When young people are equipped with the skills to discuss and analyze controversial issues, learn about the history and systemic causes of inequities, and are invited to be part of solutions, they have the opportunity to find their voice, to become a part of something bigger than themselves, and become forces for good. The session closed with observations from Keesha Gaskins-Nathan (Rockefeller Brothers Fund) on the honesty, urgency, creativity, and imagination required to do this work. Civic learning has the power to address hard questions about racial and economic inequities in our society, and to create better opportunities for all people.

### Recap of March 2018 Working Session

On March 1, 2018 the National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC) and Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement (PACE), in collaboration with the Charles F. Kettering Foundation, hosted a working session “Exploring Civic Learning as a Pathway to Equity and Opportunity”. Approximately 65 participants including civic learning experts and program providers, funders, youth development and community-based leaders, researchers as well as civic engagement and service organizations gathered to discuss the four recommendations for civic learning as a pathway to equity and opportunity. Through this convening, we aimed to accomplish the following objectives:

- Define the value proposition of civic learning to address societal inequities, improve community outcomes, and find a place for everyone in the civic experience.
- Identify what is needed to make the case that civic learning is part of the solutions set that can influence equity and opportunity outcomes.
- Develop an action plan, based on recommendations from the field, for philanthropy and other leaders to support and invest in civic learning as a pathway to increased equity and opportunity for students, institutions, and communities.

More detailed and unsynthesized notes from the March 1 working session are available upon request. Please contact Kristin Cotter from NCoC at [conference@ncoc.org](mailto:conference@ncoc.org).

### Acknowledgements

NCoC and PACE would like to thank these organizations for their partnership and participation in this project:

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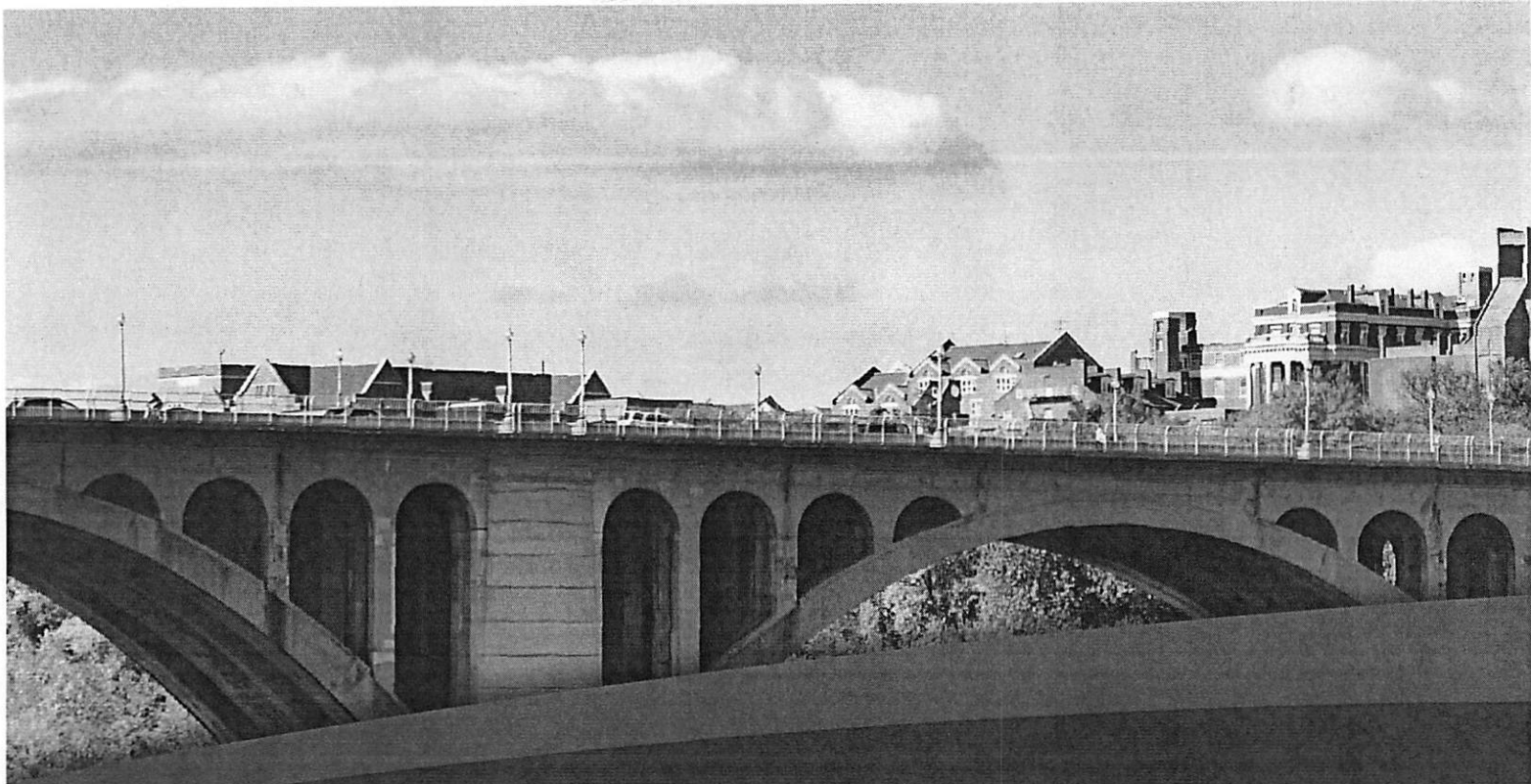


# DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CIVIC HEALTH INDEX



  
**Serve DC**  
THE MAYOR'S OFFICE ON VOLUNTEERISM

  
**NCoC**  
National Conference on Citizenship  
*Connecting People. Strengthening Our Country.*



## ABOUT THE PARTNERS

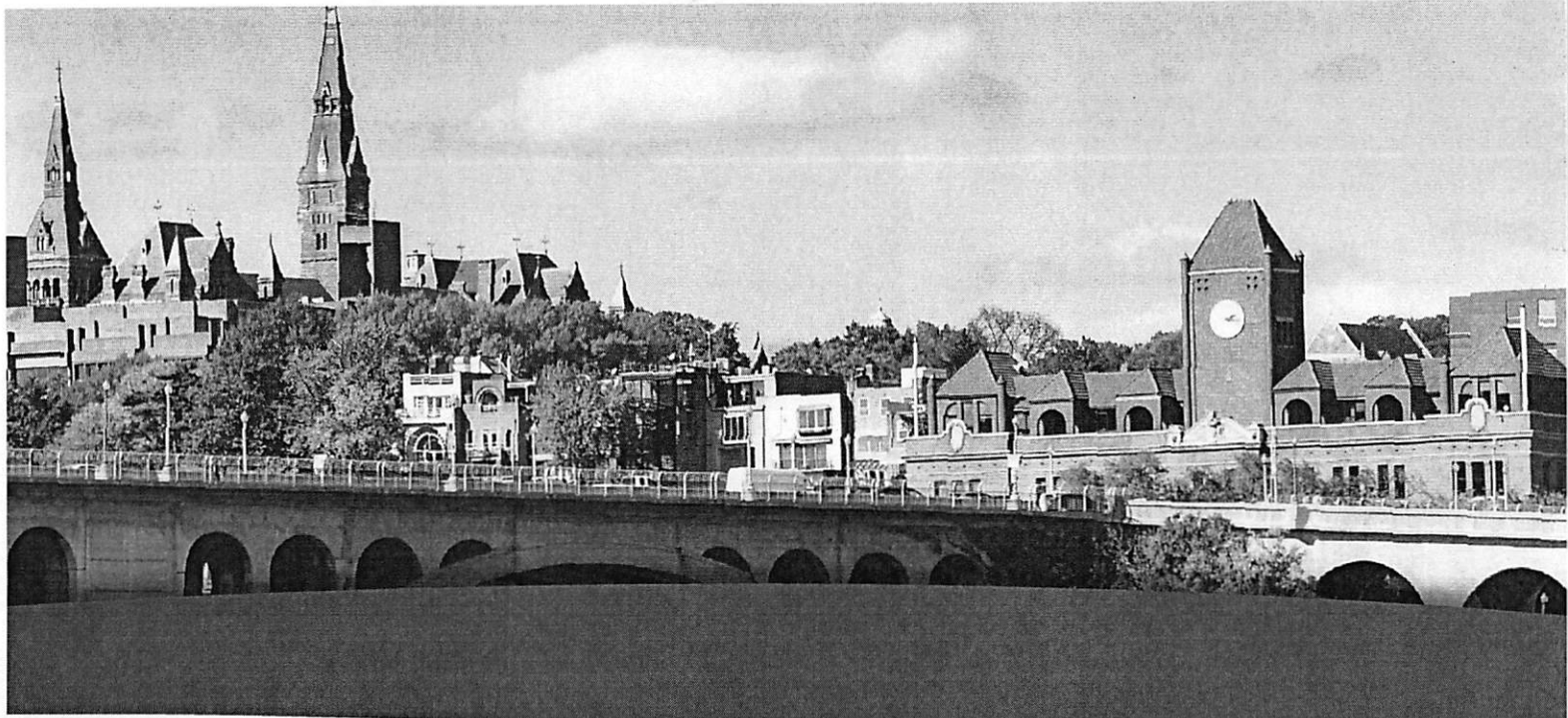
### NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CITIZENSHIP

The National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC) is a congressionally chartered organization dedicated to strengthening civic life in America. We pursue our mission through a cutting-edge civic health initiative, an innovative national service project, and cross-sector conferences. At the core of our efforts is the belief that every person has the ability to help their community and country thrive.

### SERVE DC — THE MAYOR'S OFFICE ON VOLUNTEERISM

Serve DC — The Mayor's Office on Volunteerism promotes service and volunteerism as sustainable solutions to meeting community needs. Serve DC seeks to fulfill its mission by transforming communities through service. We transform communities by leveraging national service grant funds, programs, and resources to promote and support AmeriCorps, AmeriCorps VISTA, Senior Corps, and other Corporation for National & Community Service programs and initiatives; facilitating meaningful volunteer opportunities for anyone who lives, works, or visits the District of Columbia; and by training residents to support our Emergency Response System in the event of a disaster or emergency.





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## INTRODUCTION

Washington, DC is the home to all three branches of the United States government. The District of Columbia is a symbol of political, economic, and civic freedom to millions of people across the world.

To more than 640,000 individuals of all ages, races, genders, ethnicities, sexual orientations, and economic backgrounds it is also home. The District is comprised of a dynamic and diverse demographic of people that create a unique community. This community illustrates how far this nation has come and how far it still needs to go in order to live up to our Founders' vision of democracy and justice for all.

As with any city or community, the District's civic health - a measure of the well-being of a community, state, or nation - is vital. A city, state, or nation with strong civic health is more socially and economically resilient, has more effective governance, and provides a better quality of life for its residents. A weak level of civic health can lead to barriers in addressing public problems and meeting community needs.

Researchers have pointed to a number of useful ways to measure civic health. For the purposes of this report, we focus on five broad elements:

- **Service and Volunteering:** To what extent are citizens stepping forward, engaging in service to and with fellow community members?
- **Group Membership and Leadership:** To what extent are citizens joining organizations and other groups that meet on a regular basis? How many are stepping forward as leaders of these groups?
- **Connecting to Information:** To what extent are citizens getting informed by connecting to news from print, broadcast, and online sources, as well as by talking with neighbors and friends about political issues?
- **Social Connectedness:** To what extent are citizens inclined to interact with neighbors, working together informally to fix things in the community—or even just to know one another?
- **Political Action:** To what extent are citizens voting and taking other political actions beyond election day, such as talking or meeting with office holders, writing letters to the editor for publication in newspapers, or attending rallies or meetings?

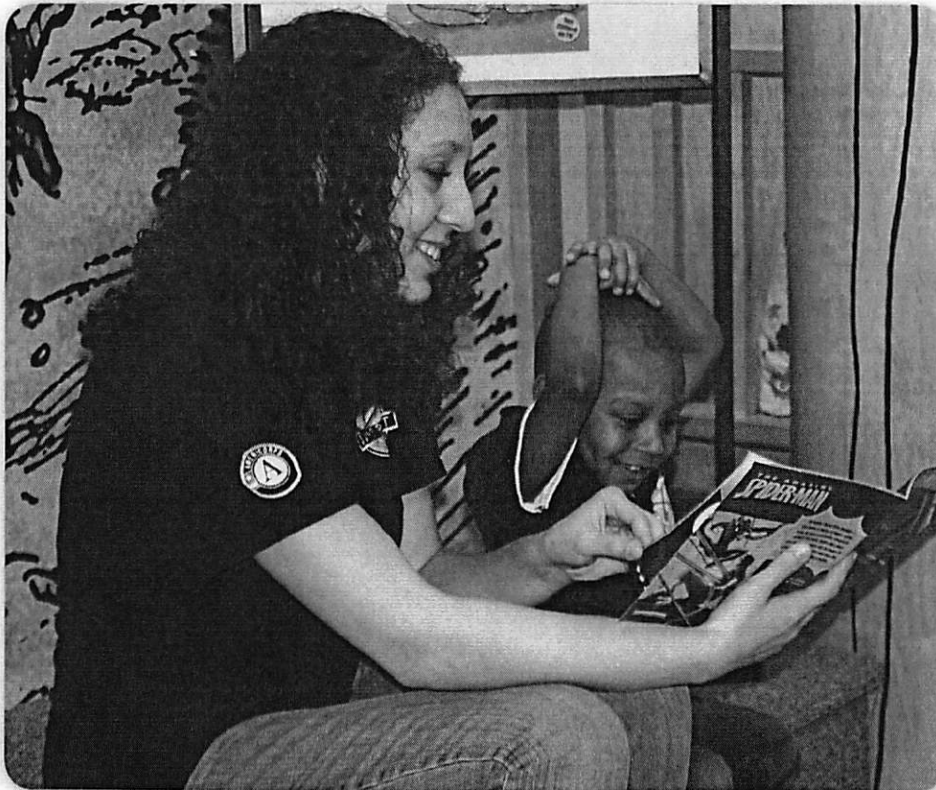
Taken together, these elements give a sense of the District's civic health. This report, commissioned by Serve DC and the National Conference on Citizenship, is an effort to understand the civic health of the District. It aims to elevate discussion and dialogue about community engagement rates, civic strengths and challenges, and what can be done to increase opportunities for all residents to be involved in bettering their community. The District is one of 25 states and 9 cities nationwide engaged in such efforts to use data to drive dialogue and action in service of a stronger community.

*Note: Data in this report pull from multiple collection years. In every instance the report uses the most recent data available to highlight the District's civic health. Further information is available in the endnotes section.*

## ***Executive Summary of Key Findings***

1. *Volunteering is strong (32.2%) and above the national average, but highly segmented based on education and income.*
2. *Charitable giving was 53.2%, placing the District in the bottom half of states for this indicator.*
3. *Though District residents do not have full congressional representation, they had the highest voter turnout rate (75.9%) in the 2012 presidential election and are highly engaged in local elections (4th of 51), regardless of their backgrounds.*
4. *District residents are highly engaged in political activities compared to the rest of the nation. Washingtonians rank 1st in discussion of political issues, 4th in boycotting products due to social causes, and 4th in contact with officials.*
5. *There are large demographic divides in non-political means of engagement, such as discussion of political topics or expression of opinions using online forums.*
6. *Washingtonians are among the least neighborly citizens in the country. Ranking at the bottom for trust in neighbors and 49th out of 51 for exchanging favors with neighbors. However, Washingtonians with fewer means and less education seemingly build relationships with neighbors as much as, or sometimes more than those with more means.*
7. *District residents have less confidence in major public institutions including corporations and public schools than other states. However, Washingtonians' confidence in the media is the highest in the country.*

See Table 1 for percentage point estimates of each civic health indicator, along with a moving average of the past three assessments (when data are available).



**Table 1: Percent estimates, rankings, and moving average for the civic health indicators**

|                                                               |                                                                                      | Latest<br>Estimates<br>2011-2012 | Latest<br>Ranking*<br>2011-2012 | Moving Avg.<br>2010-2012<br>pooled <sup>2</sup> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| <b>VOLUNTEERING,<br/>GIVING, &amp; GROUP<br/>MEMBERSHIP</b>   | Volunteer                                                                            | 32.2%                            | 15th                            | 29.1%                                           |
|                                                               | Give \$25 or more to charity                                                         | 53.2%                            | 28th                            | 49.5%                                           |
|                                                               | Attend at least one public meeting                                                   | 17.5%                            | 5th                             | 15.7%                                           |
|                                                               | Hold a leadership role in an organization                                            | 15.9%                            | 7th                             | 13.9%                                           |
|                                                               | Group association <sup>3</sup>                                                       | 41.3%                            | 24th                            | 40.9%                                           |
| <b>VOTING, REGISTRATION, &amp; POLITICAL<br/>INVOLVEMENT</b>  | Voter turnout (2012)                                                                 | 75.9%                            | 1st                             | N/A                                             |
|                                                               | Voter registration (2012)                                                            | 83.4%                            | 2nd                             | N/A                                             |
|                                                               | Vote in local elections most or all of the time <sup>1</sup>                         | 70.0%                            | 4th                             | N/A                                             |
|                                                               | Talk about politics with friends and family frequently <sup>1,4</sup>                | 46.1%                            | 1st                             | 46.8%                                           |
|                                                               | Express opinions on Internet frequently                                              | 13.2%                            | 2nd                             | N/A                                             |
|                                                               | Contact or visit a public official <sup>1</sup>                                      | 21.0%                            | 4th                             | N/A                                             |
|                                                               | Buy or boycott product(s) <sup>1</sup>                                               | 20.3%                            | 4th                             | N/A                                             |
| <b>INTERACTIONS WITH<br/>NEIGHBORS,<br/>FRIENDS OR FAMILY</b> | Eat dinner with a member of household frequently <sup>1,4</sup>                      | 78.2%                            | 51st                            | 80.2%                                           |
|                                                               | See or hear from family and friends frequently <sup>1,4</sup>                        | 82.3%                            | 14th                            | N/A                                             |
|                                                               | Work with neighbors to fix or improve something in the community                     | 16.3%                            | 5th                             | 14.9%                                           |
|                                                               | Exchange (giving or receiving) favors with neighbors frequently <sup>1,4</sup>       | 11.1%                            | 49th                            | 11.3%                                           |
|                                                               | Trust all or most neighbors <sup>1</sup>                                             | 35.2%                            | 51st                            | N/A                                             |
| <b>CONFIDENCE IN<br/>INSTITUTIONS</b>                         | Express confidence in media (some or a great deal of confidence) <sup>1</sup>        | 72.4%                            | 1st                             | N/A                                             |
|                                                               | Express confidence in schools (some or a great deal of confidence) <sup>1</sup>      | 86.2%                            | 43rd                            | N/A                                             |
|                                                               | Express confidence in corporations (some or a great deal of confidence) <sup>1</sup> | 55.0%                            | 48th                            | N/A                                             |

\*District rankings are classified with states. For all of the indicators from the Civic Engagement Supplement (such as talking about politics and doing favors for neighbors), data are only available up to 2011, as those questions were not asked in 2012. Please see end notes for full description of superscript annotations.



## VOLUNTEERING & GIVING

The District ranked 15th in volunteering in 2012, with residents volunteering at a strong rate of 32.2%. An estimated 169,000 residents in total volunteered their time during that year, compared to the national volunteering rate of 26.5%. In 2011, the volunteering rate in the District was 27.2% and the national volunteering rate was 26.8%.

District residents were also more likely to work with neighbors on a community issue than the national average. However, we found that the District's service sector might be somewhat segmented, meaning that different populations are volunteering in specific niches with less crossover of groups. Here are some notable findings:

Religious organizations are not currently a common place for volunteering and service in the District, compared to the nation as a whole. Nationwide, 33.4% of volunteers spend their time serving through religious organizations, but in the District, just 18.2% do so.

However, African Americans are more likely to volunteer through religious organizations; 28.6% volunteer through churches, mosques, and synagogues compared to 14.0% of White non-Hispanic residents.

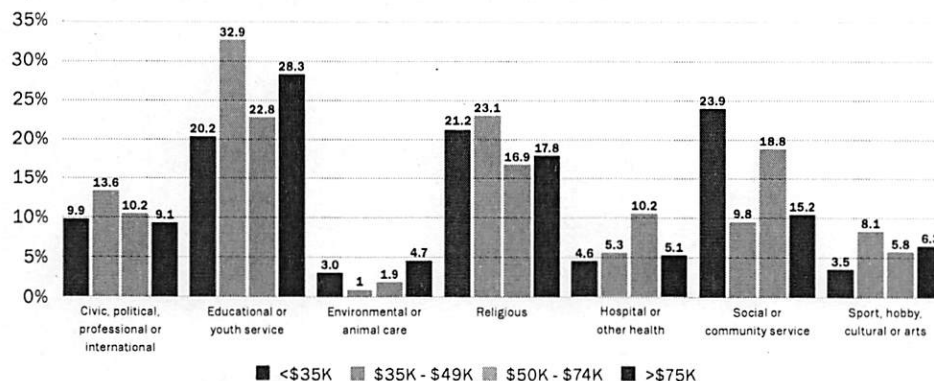
Furthermore, 40.3% of the Silent generation (1925-1942) volunteers serve through religious organizations, compared to the 18.6% of the overall District population.

The types of activities volunteers engage in are segmented somewhat by education and income. For example, low-income residents tended to provide general office help as a volunteer while high-income residents described their activities as "professional services." Providing professional services was also common among older volunteers (Boomers and Silent generations, compared to Millennials).



Volunteers from different social classes seem to be doing service via different venues and different activities.

**Types of organizations where volunteers served by household income**

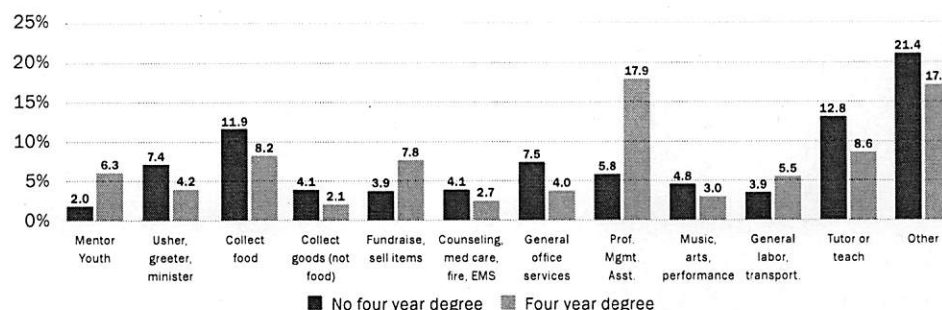


In charitable giving, the District ranked 28th, with 53.2% of residents giving \$25 or more in charitable donations in 2012. Nationally, 51.8% of Americans gave \$25 or more in charitable donations. Last year, 46.7% of District residents gave at this level.



*Why do you volunteer? Do you see your volunteerism as a way to make connections and contributions to your community? What is the impact? What are the best ways to encourage more people to volunteer? What are ways that residents of different backgrounds can come together and learn together through service?*

### Types of volunteering by educational attainment



*"What this illustrates is just how generous our community is. We have so much to be proud of. We give, above the national averages, of both our time and treasure. While these numbers are very positive, I'd like to see the District of Columbia lead the pack in both areas – giving and volunteering – in the coming years."*

-- Terri Lee Freeman

President, Community Foundation of the National Capital Region

## VOTING & REGISTRATION

Although the District does not have a voting representative in Congress, it led the nation in voter participation. In the 2012 presidential election, 75.9% of the District's eligible residents (i.e., U.S. citizens aged 18 and over) reported voting, and 83.4% said they were registered to vote. The District ranked 1st in voter turnout and 2nd in voter registration. The national rates were 61.8% and 71.2%, respectively. Nationwide, voter turnout declined slightly compared to 2008, when 63.6% voted and 71.0% were registered. In the District, however, voter registration increased by 5.1 percentage points and turnout increased by 1.8 points, meaning that electoral participation in the District differed from the national trend.

### Voting & registration at a glance\*

|                                                              | Ranking | DC    | US    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------|-------|-------|
| Voter turnout (2012)                                         | 1st     | 75.9% | 61.8% |
| Voter registration (2012)                                    | 2nd     | 83.4% | 71.2% |
| Vote in local elections most or all of the time <sup>1</sup> | 4th     | 70.0% | 57.8% |

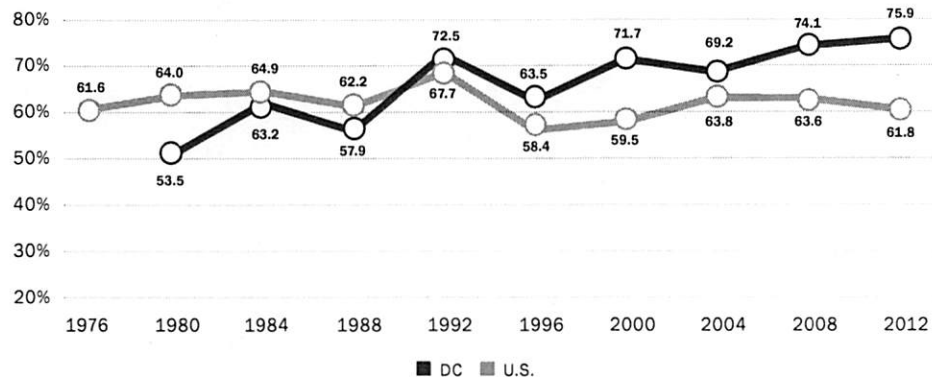
\*For all of the indicators from the Civic Engagement Supplement (such as talking about politics and doing favors for neighbors), data are only available up to 2011, as those questions were not asked in 2012. Please see end notes for full description of superscript annotations.

In 2010, Washingtonians' electoral participation was on par with the nation as a whole. The District ranked 32nd in voter turnout, with a rate of 45.3% for citizens aged 18 and over. That year, the national turnout rate was 45.5% for all citizens aged 18 and older. In 2010, the District ranked 20th among all states in the rate of citizens who are registered to vote, at 66.9%. The national voter registration rate for all eligible citizens in 2010 was 65.1%.

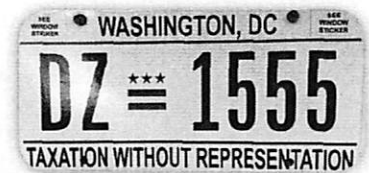
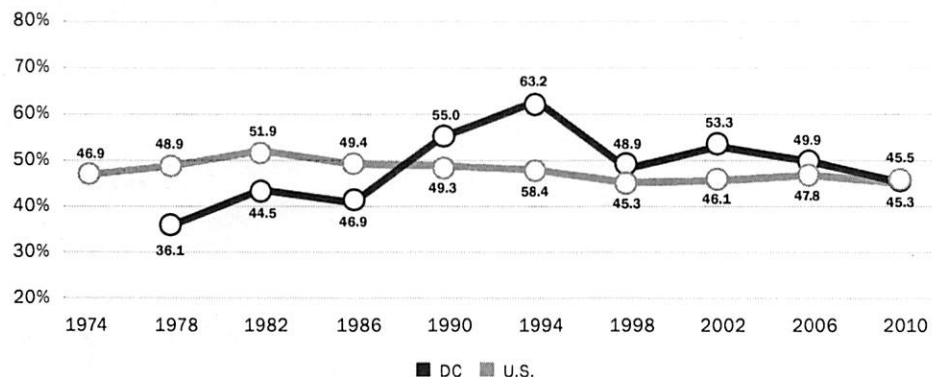
The District ranked 4th in the local voting rate, with 70.0% of District residents saying that they sometimes or always voted in local elections, such as for mayor or school board, compared with 57.8% of residents nationally.



Voter turnout 1972-2012 (presidential)



Voter turnout 1974-2010 (midterm)



Although the District does not have a voting representative in Congress, it led the nation in voter participation.



What does the willingness to vote show about the civic spirit of District residents? If they are willing to show up at the polls, but not to volunteer or engage in other ways, what are the implications for the efficacy of community impact? How can this gap be bridged?



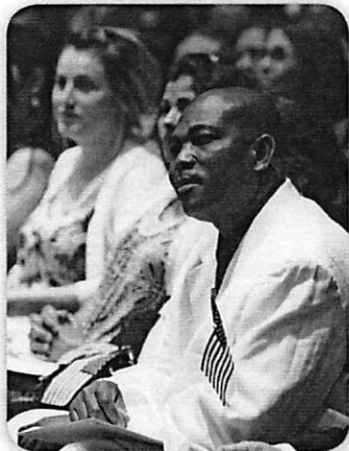
"To have an American jurisdiction in which 640,000 citizens enthusiastically voted and were ranked number one in the nation for voter turnout in the 2012 Presidential election, and realize they do not have an equal voice and vote in Congress is a great civil injustice. In the District of Columbia, we raise families, pay taxes, fight and die in wars, yet we are denied voting representation in Congress. Time and again, citizens of the District of Columbia have shown great commitment to democracy and our nation by showing up to the polls, in numbers that rival national voter participation. As active citizens, we must continue to harness the voice of DC citizens to advocate for our right to vote and demand full voting representation in Congress for the District of Columbia."

-- Kimberly Perry  
Executive Director, DC Vote

## POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT

As one might expect, District residents are highly engaged in political activities, ranging from discussion of political issues, boycotting products due to social causes, local voting, and contact with officials.

Photography credit: Daemmrch Photography



### 4th

The District ranked 4th in each of the following categories: voting in local elections, contacting or visiting a public official, and buying or boycotting products.

#### Political involvement at a glance\*

|                                                               | Ranking | DC    | US    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------|-------|-------|
| Talk about politics w/ friends & family (freq) <sup>1,4</sup> | 1st     | 46.1% | 29.3% |
| Express opinions on Internet (freq)                           | 2nd     | 13.2% | 8.0%  |
| Contact or visit a public official <sup>1</sup>               | 4th     | 21.0% | 12.3% |
| Buy or boycott product(s) <sup>1</sup>                        | 4th     | 20.3% | 12.1% |

\*For all of the indicators from the Civic Engagement Supplement (such as talking about politics and doing favors for neighbors), data are only available up to 2011, as those questions were not asked in 2012. Please see end notes for full description of superscript annotations.

In 2011, the District ranked 4th in the nation, with 21.0% of its residents reporting having contacted or visited a public official at any level of government. Nationally, only 12.3% reported doing so. In 2010, the national rate for this indicator was 9.9%, while in the District it was 18.0%.

The District ranked 4th in the rate of people who bought or boycotted a product or service in 2011 because of a socially or politically conscious view or stance: 20.3% of individuals engaged in this behavior, compared to 12.1% nationally. In 2010, 10.0% of people nationwide reported making such choices, compared to 16.7% in the District.

One way residents engage in politics is through dialogue. The District ranked 1st in the rate of people who talk about politics with friends and family at least a few times a week: 46.1%. The national rate for this indicator was 29.3%. In 2010 that rate was 26.0%, while in the District the 2010 estimate was 42.1%.

There are large demographic divides in other means of engagement, such as discussion of political topics or expression of opinions using online forums.

Four-year degree holders are more than twice as likely to use the Internet to express their opinions as those with a high school education or less (16.6% vs. 7.2%). They are also almost four times as likely to contact a public official about issues in the community (29.7% vs. 8.1%).

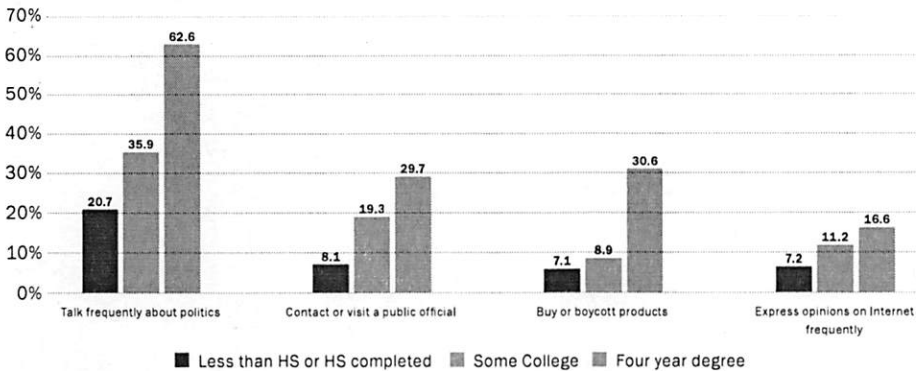
Regular discussion of political issues among District residents with a high school education or less is relatively uncommon (20.7%, "frequently"). However, it is three times as common among four-year degree holders (62.6%).



*"It is no great surprise to me that District residents engage in politics through dialogue and action at rates higher than many of other places around the country. Washingtonians understand that politics is really about people – creating better education, and economic and quality of life opportunities for all people. We care about each other and making it a great place to live for everyone."*

-- Patrick Mara  
Ward 1 Representative,  
District of Columbia State Board of Education

### Political involvement by educational attainment



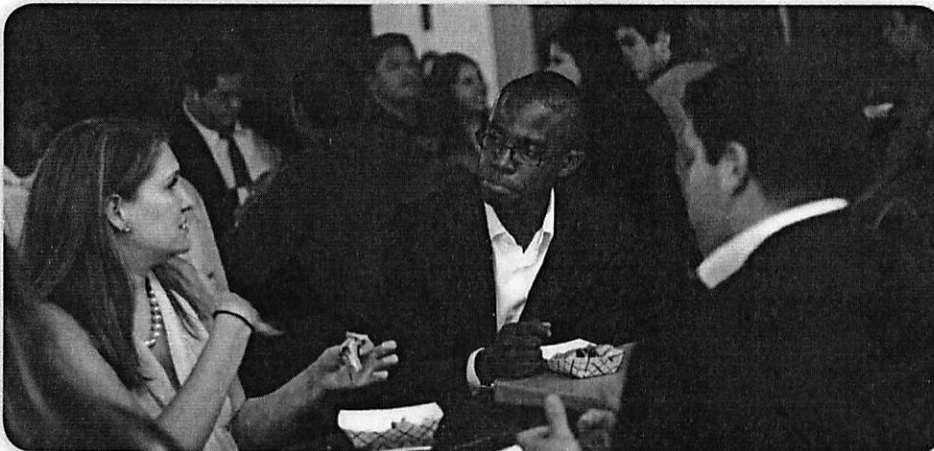
*"It is clear that Washingtonians are one of the main reasons the city continues to be a vibrant place to live, engaged in making this a better place to live, both for themselves and for others. The historic rehabilitation of Old Naval Hospital on Capitol Hill into Hill Center, a vibrant home for arts, culture, and education, is a prime example of how a concerned group of neighbors banded together to impact positive change in their neighborhood."*

-- Diana B. Ingraham

Executive Director, Hill Center at the Old Naval Hospital



*What does it say about our community if people will talk about politics with family and friends at a high rate, but don't eat dinner with their families as regularly? What can the District teach other areas about the perceived ethic that exists here that "politics are about people?"*



## INTERACTIONS WITH NEIGHBORS

District residents ranked very high in neighborhood engagement through meetings or projects, but ranked much lower in other indicators like informal connections, trust in their neighbors, and time spent with their family at the dinner table.

### Interactions with neighbors, friends, or family at a glance\*

|                                                                                | Ranking | DC    | US    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|-------|-------|
| Work with neighbors to fix or improve something in the community               | 5th     | 16.3% | 8.4%  |
| Attended a public meeting                                                      | 5th     | 17.5% | 9.0%  |
| Exchange (giving or receiving) favors with neighbors frequently <sup>1,4</sup> | 49th    | 11.1% | 14.1% |
| Trust all or most neighbors <sup>1</sup>                                       | 51st    | 35.2% | 56.7% |

\*For all of the indicators from the Civic Engagement Supplement (such as talking about politics and doing favors for neighbors), data are only available up to 2011, as those questions were not asked in 2012. Please see end notes for full description of superscript annotations.

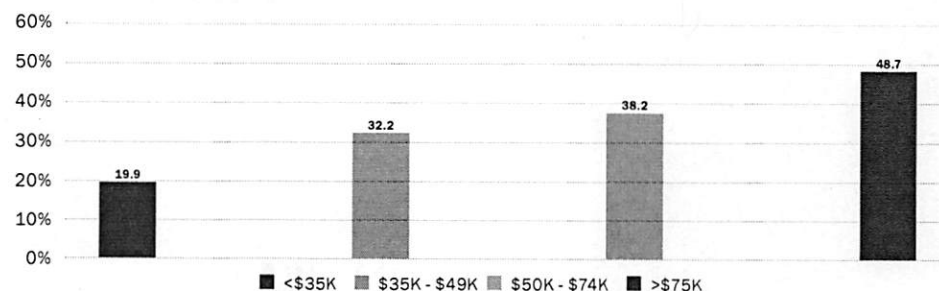
In 2012, 16.3% of District residents worked with neighbors to improve or fix something in their community. The District ranked 5th on this indicator; nationally, only 8.4% of U.S. residents worked with their neighbors. In 2011, the District ranked 7th, with 14.8% of residents involved with their neighbors in this way.

Meanwhile, 17.5% of District residents attended at least one public meeting where community issues were discussed and ranked 5th on this indicator in 2012. Nationally, 9.0% attended such meetings. In 2011, the District ranked 8th, as 15.2% attended public meetings.

On the other hand, in 2011, the District ranked 49th in the rate of people who exchanged favors with their neighbors a few times a week or more (i.e., "frequently"), with 11.1%. Nationwide, 14.1% of Americans say they frequently exchange favors with their neighbors. In 2010, the District of Columbia estimate for this indicator was 13.5%, while nationally the rate was 15.2%.

The District ranked 51st (last) in the percentage of people who reported trusting all or most of their neighbors in 2011, with 35.2%. Nationwide, 56.7% of Americans said they trusted their neighbors. This was the first year that this question was included in the survey.

### Trust all or most neighbors by income



*How often do you interact with your neighbors? How can we remove barriers and interact with your neighbors more frequently? What factors contribute to this lack of trust and how can it be overcome? What does this lack of trust mean for the District's ability to engage with their neighbors? What are the best ways to build trust?*

## COMMUNICATIONS WITH FRIENDS OR FAMILY

In 2011, 82.3% of District residents said they saw or heard from friends and family at least a few times a week, which ranked the District 14th on this indicator. At the national level, 79.0% of Americans said they saw or heard from family or friends a few times a week or more. This was the first year that the question was included in the survey.

### Communications with friends or family at a glance\*

|                                                                 | Ranking | DC    | US    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|---------|-------|-------|
| See or hear from family and friends frequently <sup>1,4</sup>   | 14th    | 82.3% | 79.0% |
| Eat dinner with a member of household frequently <sup>1,4</sup> | 51st    | 78.2% | 89.5% |

\*For all of the indicators from the Civic Engagement Supplement (such as talking about politics and doing favors for neighbors), data are only available up to 2011, as those questions were not asked in 2012. Please see end notes for full description of superscript annotations.

When it comes to social capital indicators, Washingtonians with less means and education seem to have ways to build relationships with neighbors as much as, or sometimes more than those with more means.

For example, 52.4% of District residents with a high school education or less talked frequently with their neighbors, compared to 46.5% of four-year degree holders.

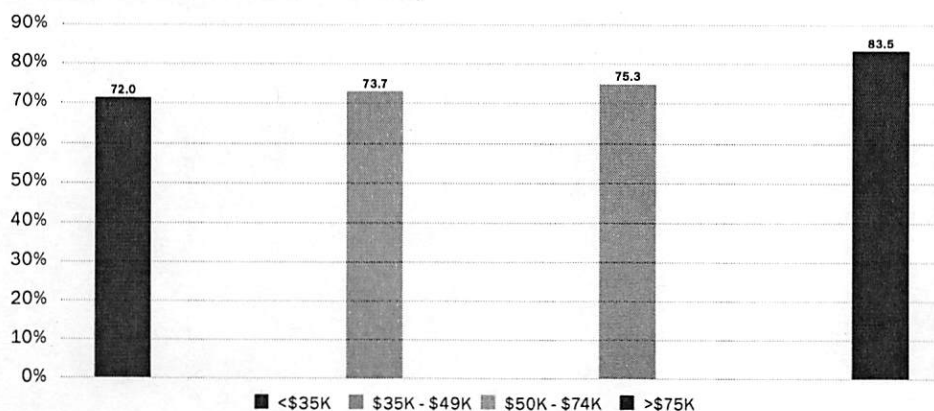
Given the data trends in volunteering, the District's civic infrastructure may be offering ways to build horizontal social capital (i.e., bonding capital), but not as much vertical social capital (i.e., loose networks that cross demographic and geographical boundaries, also termed bridging capital).

However, the District ranked 51st (last) in the rate of people who reported eating dinner with their family a few times a week or more, with a rate of 78.2% in 2011. The national estimate for this indicator was 89.5%. In 2010, the national rate for this indicator was 88.1%, and in the District, it was 79.4%.



*What factors do you think contribute to these statistics? Do these statistics imply something negative or positive about our community, particularly given the lack of trust of neighbors highlighted earlier? Do Washingtonians stay connected in other ways?*

### Eat dinner with family and friends by household income



## 52.4%

of District residents with a high school education or less talked frequently with their neighbors, compared to 46.5% of 4-year degree holders.



## GROUP MEMBERSHIP

In 2011, 41.3% of the residents in the District said that they belonged to at least one type of organization, and 15.9% said they had a leadership role in an organization as an officer or committee member. Nationally, 39.2% participated in one or more types of groups and 10.6% took leadership roles in the community. The District ranked 24th in group membership and 7th in leadership rate.

### Group membership at a glance\*

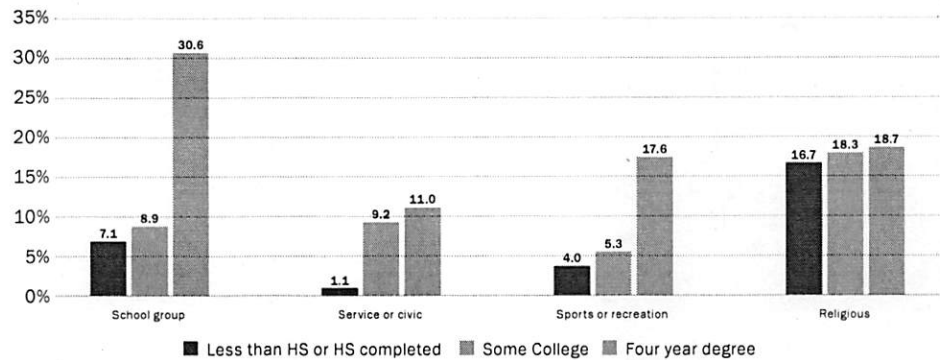
|                                                    | Ranking | DC    | US    |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------|-------|-------|
| Hold a leadership role in a community organization | 7th     | 15.9% | 10.6% |
| Group membership <sup>3</sup>                      | 24th    | 41.3% | 39.2% |

\*For all of the indicators from the Civic Engagement Supplement (such as talking about politics and doing favors for neighbors), data are only available up to 2011, as those questions were not asked in 2012. Please see end notes for full description of superscript annotations.

There is a large gap in community group participation and leadership. For example, 1.1% of District residents with high school education or less participate in a service or civic organization, compared to 11% of four-year degree holders. Just 5% of residents with a high school education or less took a leadership role, while 22.7% of four-year degree holders did so.

Given that District residents have far more formal education than national average, this means that people with less formal education may be largely invisible in community leadership roles.

### Group membership by educational attainment



*"Engaged residents make a tremendous impact on the quality of life in the District. Our city is a better and more just place because of the efforts of individuals and organizations that are committed to civic engagement."*

-- Mayor Vincent C. Gray  
District of Columbia



*What organizations or civic associations do you belong to? How can community organizations position themselves to continue making positive impacts on the District for years to come? What can institutions do to attract more citizens to become engaged members?*

# CONFIDENCE IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

In 2011, new measures were introduced to assess residents' confidence in public institutions. The District ranked 48th in residents' confidence in corporations, with 55.0% of people reporting that they were very or somewhat confident. The national rate was 62.0%.

## Confidence in institutions at a glance\*

|                                                                                      | Ranking | DC    | US    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|-------|-------|
| Express confidence in media (some or a great deal of confidence) <sup>1</sup>        | 1st     | 72.4% | 62.0% |
| Express confidence in schools (some or a great deal of confidence) <sup>1</sup>      | 43rd    | 86.2% | 88.0% |
| Express confidence in corporations (some or a great deal of confidence) <sup>1</sup> | 48th    | 55.0% | 62.0% |

\*For all of the indicators from the Civic Engagement Supplement (such as talking about politics and doing favors for neighbors), data are only available up to 2011, as those questions were not asked in 2012. Please see end notes for full description of superscript annotations.

The District ranked 43rd in confidence in the public school system: 86.2% of people reported that they were very or somewhat confident in the public school system, compared to 88.0% of U.S. residents as a whole. Though the District's national ranking is low on this indicator, readers should note that the difference between the local and national percentages is very small, meaning that most states' residents, when averaged, showed a similar level of confidence in public schools across the country. On the other hand, the District ranked 1st in confidence in the media, as 72.4% of people reported that they were very or somewhat confident, compared to 62.0% nationwide.<sup>5</sup>



*"DC Public Schools (DCPS) is on the rise. We are excited about the progress we have made and confident it will continue. The more our community learns about DCPS, the more they see all the ways in which our students are growing and thriving."*

-- Kaya Henderson

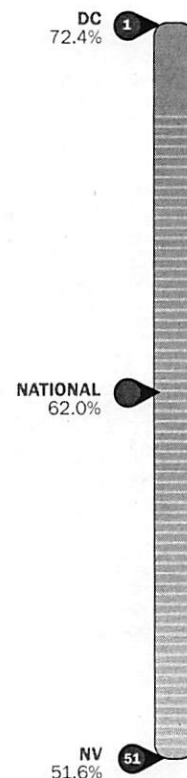
Chancellor, DC Public Schools

## CONCLUSION

The inaugural *District of Columbia Civic Health Index* reveals much about the way our community conducts its civic business as a whole. Though there are some arenas in which our community is performing well, there are many areas in which we can seek to improve. Understanding this critical information, as well as the importance of civic activities and engagement, is the first step to improvement. We hope the information provided here will serve as a tool for informed dialogue, strategy, and action.

Firmly believing that engaged communities are strong communities, the partners of this report are eager to assist District residents in improving our community's civic health. By utilizing each of our own unique skills, resources, experience, and knowledge as individuals and organizations, we can all work together for the civic health and overall success of our great community.

## CONFIDENCE IN THE MEDIA





## DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CIVIC HEALTH INDEX 2013

This report presents findings for the District's 2013 Civic Health Index. We calculated local civic health statistics and national rankings using the Census Current Population Survey (CPS), part of the monthly labor statistics survey that collects data from approximately 150,000 individuals in the United States. The civic health data for this report came from the September 2012 Volunteers Supplement, November 2012 Voting and Registration Supplement, and November 2011 Civic Engagement Supplement. These represent the latest available data, since the Civic Engagement Supplement was not administered in 2012.

We present percentage point estimates of important civic health indicators and a national ranking. While each one represents a significant aspect of civic health in the District of Columbia, no single indicator should be treated as the sole representation of the city's civic health. It provides single-year estimates for most indicators, along with the past-year estimate (i.e., from 2011) for a short-term comparison. As estimates can vary quite a bit from year to year, we also provide estimates based on the pooled data (2010-2012) to give a sense of the longer-term trends in the District of Columbia. The data in this report are confined to the geographic boundaries of the District of Columbia, rather than the metro area which encompasses two neighboring states.

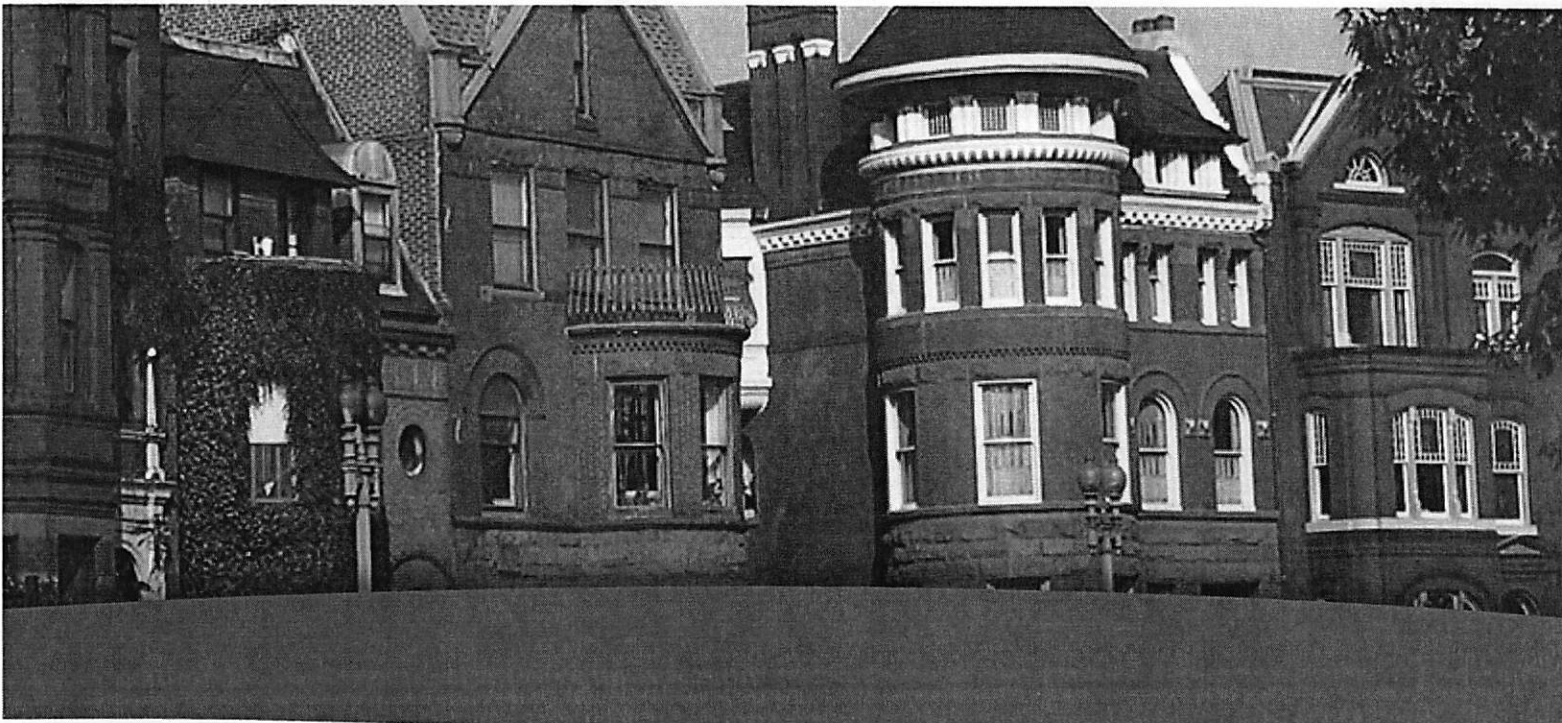
### TECHNICAL NOTES

Unless otherwise noted, findings presented in this Report are based on CIRCLE's analysis of the Census Current Population Survey (CPS) data. Any and all errors are our own. Volunteering estimates are from CPS September Volunteering Supplement, 2002-2012, voting and registration data come from the CPS November Voting/Registration Supplement, 1972-2012, and all other civic engagement indicators, such as discussion of political information and connection to neighbors, come from the 2011 CPS Civic Engagement Supplement.

Using a probability selected sample of about 60,000 occupied households, the CPS collects monthly data on employment and demographic characteristics of the nation. Depending on the CPS supplement, the single-year DC CPS sample size used for

this Report ranges from 1,133 (civic engagement supplement) to 1,242 (volunteer supplement), 1,385 (voting supplement) residents from across the district. This sample is then weighted to representative population demographics for the district. Estimates for the volunteering indicators (e.g., volunteering, working with neighbors, making donations) are based on U.S. residents ages 16 and older. Estimates for civic engagement and social connection indicators (e.g., favors with neighbors, discuss politics) are based on U.S. residents ages 18 and older. Voting and registration statistics are based on U.S. citizens who are 18 and older (eligible voters). When we examined the relationship between educational attainment and engagement, estimates are based on adults ages 25 and older, based on the assumption younger people may be completing their education.





Because we draw from multiple sources of data with varying sample sizes, we are not able to compute one margin of error for the District across all indicators. Any analysis that breaks down the sample into smaller groups (e.g., gender, education) will have smaller samples and therefore the margin of error will increase. Data for some indicators are pooled from multiple years (2009-2011 or 2010-2012) for a more reliable estimate when sample sizes for certain cross tabulations may have been small. Furthermore, national rankings, while useful in benchmarking, may be small in range, with one to two percentage points separating the state/district ranked first from the state/district ranked last. Although Washington D.C. is not a state, the Census treats the district as one of the states. Therefore, we calculated ranking for DC that compares the districts alongside all the states.

It is also important to emphasize that our margin of error estimates are approximate, as CPS sampling is highly complex and accurate estimation of error rates involves many parameters that are not publicly available.

## A WORD ABOUT RECOMMENDATIONS

NCoC encourages our partners to consider how civic health data can inform dialogue and action in their communities, and to take an evidence-based approach to helping our communities and country thrive. While we encourage our partners to consider and offer specific recommendations and calls to action in our reports, we are not involved in shaping these recommendations. The opinions and recommendations expressed by our partners do not necessarily reflect those of NCoC.

## A FINAL WORD

This *Report* should be a conversation-starter. The data and ideas presented here raise as many questions as they answer. We encourage government entities, community groups, business people, leaders of all kinds, and individual citizens to treat this *Report* as a first step toward building more robust civic health in the District of Columbia.

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> For all of the indicators from the Civic Engagement Supplement (such as talking about politics and doing favors for neighbors), data are only available up to 2011, as those questions were not asked in 2012.
- <sup>2</sup> "Pooled" estimates are estimated rates of engagement over the three most recent years. It is calculated from a combined dataset from 2010, 2011, and 2012, when available. If the 2012 data are not available, we use 2009, 2010, and 2011 pooled data. We do not calculate pooled estimates for voting because voting rates from Midterm and Presidential years are often too different to combine.
- <sup>3</sup> The percentage point estimate refers to the portion of people who said they belong to any of the groups presented (religious, school, neighborhood, civic, or sports/recreation).
- <sup>4</sup> Frequently is defined as a few times a week or more.

# CIVIC HEALTH INDEX

## State and Local Partnerships

NCoC began America's Civic Health Index in 2006 to measure the level of civic engagement and health of our democracy. In 2009, NCoC was incorporated into the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act and directed to expand this civic health assessment in partnership with the Corporation for National and Community Service and the U.S. Census Bureau.

NCoC now works with partners in more than 30 communities nationwide to use civic data to lead and inspire a public dialogue about the future of citizenship in America and to drive sustainable civic strategies.

## STATES

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### Alabama

University of Alabama  
David Mathews Center  
Auburn University

### Arizona

Center for the Future of Arizona

### California

California Forward  
Center for Civic Education  
Center for Individual and  
Institutional Renewal  
Davenport Institute

### Colorado

Metropolitan State University of Denver

### Connecticut

Everyday Democracy  
Secretary of the State of Connecticut

### District of Columbia

ServeDC

### Florida

Florida Joint Center for Citizenship  
Bob Graham Center for Public Service  
Lou Frey Institute of Politics  
and Government  
John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

### Georgia

GeorgiaForward  
Carl Vinson Institute of Government,  
The University of Georgia  
Georgia Family Connection Partnership

### Illinois

Citizen Advocacy Center  
McCormick Foundation

### Indiana

Center on Congress at Indiana University  
Hoosier State Press  
Association Foundation  
Indiana Bar Foundation  
Indiana Supreme Court  
Indiana University Northwest

### Kentucky

Commonwealth of Kentucky,  
Secretary of State's Office  
Institute for Citizenship  
& Social Responsibility,  
Western Kentucky University  
Kentucky Advocates for Civic Education  
McConnell Center, University of Louisville

### Maryland

Mannakee Circle Group  
Center for Civic Education  
Common Cause-Maryland  
Maryland Civic Literacy Commission

### Massachusetts

Harvard Institute of Politics

### Michigan

Michigan Nonprofit Association  
Michigan Campus Compact  
Michigan Community Service Commission  
Volunteer Centers of Michigan  
Council of Michigan Foundations  
The LEAGUE Michigan

### Minnesota

Center for Democracy and Citizenship

### Missouri

Missouri State University  
Park University  
Saint Louis University  
University of Missouri Kansas City  
University of Missouri Saint Louis  
Washington University

### Nebraska

Nebraskans for Civic Reform

### New Hampshire

Carsey Institute

### New York

Siena College Research Institute  
New York State Commission on National  
and Community Service

### North Carolina

North Carolina Civic  
Education Consortium  
Center for Civic Education  
NC Center for Voter Education  
Democracy NC  
NC Campus Compact  
Western Carolina University Department of  
Public Policy

### Ohio

Miami University Hamilton Center for  
Civic Engagement

### Oklahoma

University of Central Oklahoma  
Oklahoma Campus Compact

### Pennsylvania

Center for Democratic Deliberation  
National Constitution Center

### South Carolina

University of South Carolina Upstate

### Texas

University of Texas at San Antonio  
The Annette Strauss Institute for Civic Life,  
University of Texas at Austin

### Virginia

Center for the Constitution at James  
Madison's Montpelier  
Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

## ISSUE SPECIFIC

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### Latinos Civic Health Index

Carnegie Corporation

### Millennials Civic Health Index

Mobilize.org  
Harvard Institute of Politics  
CIRCLE

### Economic Health

Knight Foundation  
Corporation for National & Community  
Service (CNCS)  
CIRCLE

## CITIES

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### Chicago

McCormick Foundation

### Kansas City & Saint Louis

Missouri State University

Park University

Saint Louis University

University of Missouri Kansas City

University of Missouri Saint Louis

Washington University

### Miami

Florida Joint Center for Citizenship

John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

Miami Foundation

### Seattle

Seattle City Club

Boeing Company

Seattle Foundation

### Twin Cities

Center for Democracy and Citizenship

Citizens League

John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

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Daniel Paul Professor of Government,  
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Harvard University  
Director, Innovations in American  
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Former Mayor of Indianapolis

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Executive Director, Rock the Vote

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Director, Center for Promise

### Ilir Zherka

Executive Director,  
National Conference on Citizenship



**National Conference on Citizenship**  
*Connecting People. Strengthening Our Country.*



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COMMUNITY  
SERVICE** 

**From:** Taylor  
**To:** Judiciary (Council)  
**Subject:** Written statement on "Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018"  
**Date:** Thursday, July 12, 2018 3:02:46 PM  
**Attachments:** [Vote 16 Resolution.docx](#)  
[ATT00001.htm](#)

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Good Afternoon,

I am writing on behalf of ANC 3D, who last night voted to support the "Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018" via the attached resolution. This resolution also grants me the right to submit this written testimony on behalf of the commission.

As a young person myself, I clearly see the benefit of lowering the voting age in DC. I commend the Council for debating this act.

It is critical for the council to enfranchise a portion of the population that has been expected to accept the civic *responsibilities* of adulthood without being granted the *right* of voting along with them. Young people are campaigning to be involved in political decisions and the Council has the opportunity to ensure this right.

The District of Columbia has long fought for fairer political representation and yet some of the District's own population is currently being disenfranchised.

Lowering the voting age to 16 would have profound effects on voter turnout. Both young people who are first-time voters and the adults in their lives are more likely to vote if the voting age is 16 rather than 18. The American Political Science Review has explored the effects of "Trickle Up Political Socialization" and the resurgence of parents and role models voting more consistently when the voting age is lowered to include their children.

A vibrant democracy relies on regular voting habits in both general and primary elections. By granting 16 and 17 year olds the right to vote before they experience the great life changes that come with the graduation of high school, life-long habitual voting are more likely to be cemented.

Therefore, ANC 3D supports the passage of DC Council Bill B22-0778- "The Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018".

Thank you for your consideration of this bill and for accepting my written testimony.

Best regards,  
Commissioner Taylor Berlin



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3D  
PO Box 40846, Palisades Station  
Washington, DC 20016

*PALISADES · KENT · SPRING VALLEY · WESLEY HEIGHTS · NEW MEXICO/CATHEDRAL  
· THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY · FOXHALL VILLAGE · BERKELEY*

**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF D.C. COUNCIL BILL B22-0778  
THE YOUTH VOTE AMENDMENT ACT OF 2018**

**WHEREAS**, a flourishing democracy ensures that everyone has the right and the power to make choices about the future of their communities and nation through the ballot box;

**WHEREAS**, the District of Columbia has always fought to right the wrong of voter disenfranchisement and a lack of proper political representation;

**WHEREAS**, in the District of Columbia at 16 years old, one may register for a driver's license and pay income taxes;

**WHEREAS**, the District of Columbia City Council is currently considering recalling a recent vote on Initiative 77 due to historically low voter turnout;

**WHEREAS**, in local U.S. elections that enabled 16 and 17-year-olds to vote, turnout was up to four times the rate for registered voters under 18 years old than they were for registered voters 18 and older;

**WHEREAS**, an analysis published by the American Political Science Association (APSA) shows the “trick-up political socialization<sup>1</sup>” of parents who would have normally abstained from an election voting after their children enter the electorate;

**WHEREAS**, students are significantly more likely to develop consistent voting patterns and become lifelong voters at 16 years old than 18 years old due to their engagement in high school and lack of an intense transition when they turn 18, due to moving off to college, starting work, etc;

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<sup>1</sup> DAHLGAARD, J. (2018). Trickle-Up Political Socialization: The Causal Effect on Turnout of Parenting a Newly Enfranchised Voter. *American Political Science Review*, 112(3), 698-705. doi:10.1017/S0003055418000059

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that ANC 3D supports the passage of DC Council Bill B22-0778 — the “Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018;” and

Approved and Adopted by a vote  
of \_\_\_\_\_x\_\_\_\_\_x\_\_\_\_\_by ANC3D  
at its regularly scheduled meeting of July 11, 2018  
with a quorum present at all times

Commissioner Taylor Berlin ([3D07@anc.dc.gov](mailto:3D07@anc.dc.gov))  
is authorized to be the Commission’s representative  
in this matter and to give testimony  
on the basis of language contained in this resolution.

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Stephen K. Gardner, Chair

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY & PUBLIC SAFETY**

**ON**

**BILL 22-0778, THE "YOUTH VOTE AMENDMENT ACT OF 2018"**

**Wednesday, June 27, 2018, 2:00 p.m.  
Room 500, John A. Wilson Building  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20004**

**Rachel Coll, D.C. Board of Elections**

Good afternoon, Chairman Allen and members of the Committee on the Judiciary & Public Safety. My name is Rachel Coll, and I am the Public Information Officer for the D.C. Board of Elections (DCBOE), appearing and testifying on behalf of the Executive Director, Alice Miller, who could not be present this afternoon. On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding Bill 22-0778, the "Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018."

The Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018 (the Act) would reduce the eligible voting age for all elections in the District from 17-18 years of age to 16 years of age. Currently, individuals who are at least 16 years of age may pre-register to vote, individuals who are at least 17 years of age may vote in primary elections if they will be at least 18 years of age by the next general election, and individuals at least 18 years of age may vote in general and special elections. The Act would also require District of Columbia Public Schools and charter schools to distribute voter registration applications to students who are at least 16 years of age.

The Act would impact the Board's operations in several ways. There would be an increase in the number of registered voters, including those individuals listed as "pending" in the Board's voter registry (because they do not yet meeting the minimum age requirement), who



would be made active.<sup>1</sup> There would be an increase in the number of voter registration applications submitted and processed. Voter registration applications – whatever the source (DCBOE, Department of Motor Vehicles, etc.) – reflect current law, and would need to be amended to reflect the new minimum voting age, as would other election-related documentation published by DCBOE and other entities. Moreover, a robust education and outreach effort would be necessary in order to inform District residents of the new law.

One frequently raised concern about “youth voting” is the potential inability of youth voters to provide identification/proof of residence. While the District does not have a universal voter identification requirement, same day registrants and certain first-time voters who register other than in person must provide identification/proof of residence that bears their name and residence address. Individuals who are at least 16 years of age can obtain identification (ID) cards at the D.C. Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV),<sup>2</sup> however, not all of them will have obtained these ID cards. Moreover, they may not have any of the other acceptable forms of identification/proof of residence currently indicated in the election statute and DCBOE’s regulations.

To address this concern, the Board could adopt the practice of the DMV, and accept a Proof of D.C. Residency Certification for residents who do not have residency documents in their name. The certifier to this form attests, under penalty of perjury, that the applicant resides with them in D.C., and must provide identification and proof of their own D.C. residence. The section of the election statute that provides that same day registrants must provide proof of

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<sup>1</sup> Registration information for pre-registrants is not available to the public. Once these individuals become active, those items in their voter registration record that are not confidential under District rules and regulations would become publicly available.

<sup>2</sup> Since the passage of the Omnibus Election Reform Act of 2009, which reduced the age of pre-registration to 16 years of age, all individuals who register for a driver’s license have been able to register to vote.

residence specifies that they may do so by presenting “such identification as required under federal law, District law, *or Board regulation*, ... that shows the current name and address of the voter,” so no Council legislation would be necessary to permit the use of a Proof of D.C.

Residency Certification for these individuals. The identification requirements for certain first time voters who register other than in person are set forth in federal law (the Help America Vote Act (HAVA)) and are therefore outside of the Board’s discretion. However, these requirements do not apply to registrants who register in person, provide a verified social security or DMV-issued ID number, or are entitled to vote absentee under federal law. Therefore, we anticipate that there would not be many of these voters who would be required to provide identification.

Should the Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018 become law, DCBOE stands ready to ensure its smooth and effective implementation. We thank you for allowing us the opportunity to testify on this measure, and we hope that the Board’s perspective has been helpful. We are prepared to respond to any questions you may have at this time.

## ATTACHMENT F


Government of the District of Columbia  
Office of the Chief Financial Officer



Jeffrey S. DeWitt  
Chief Financial Officer

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** The Honorable Phil Mendelson  
Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia

**FROM:** Jeffrey S. DeWitt  
Chief Financial Officer 

**DATE:** October 31, 2018

**SUBJECT:** Fiscal Impact Statement – Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018

**REFERENCE:** Bill 22-778, Draft Committee Print as shared with the Office of Revenue Analysis on October 22, 2018

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**Conclusion**

Funds are sufficient in the fiscal year 2019 through fiscal year 2022 budget and financial plan to implement the bill.

**Background**

The bill reduces the voting age in the District of Columbia to sixteen years of age from eighteen years of age.<sup>1</sup> The bill also requires every educational institution<sup>2</sup> in the District to provide all students sixteen years of age and older with voter registration applications or information on where to register to vote online.

**Financial Plan Impact**

Funds are sufficient in the fiscal year 2019 through fiscal year 2022 budget and financial plan to implement the bill. There are approximately 10,500 people living in the District aged sixteen and seventeen.<sup>3</sup> These individuals will now be eligible to register for and vote in elections in the District. The Board of Elections (BOE) will need to provide additional documents and accommodate additional voters at polling locations, but BOE can manage these costs with its existing budgeted resources. Educational institutions can meet the bill's requirements by providing information to

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<sup>1</sup> By amending the District of Columbia Election Code of 1955, approved August 12, 1955 (69 Stat. 699; D.C. Official Code § 1-1001.02).

<sup>2</sup> Educational institutions include District of Columbia public schools, public charter schools, independent schools, private schools, parochial schools, and private instructors.

<sup>3</sup> According to the American Community Survey 2013 to 2017.

The Honorable Phil Mendelson

FIS: Bill 22-778, "Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018," Draft Committee Print as shared with the Office of Revenue Analysis on October 22, 2018

students on where to register to vote online. District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) was also designated a voter registration agency<sup>4</sup> and as part of that designation DCPS will receive additional materials and support from BOE to aid voter registration efforts.

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<sup>4</sup> Voter Registration Agency Amendment Act of 2018, enacted September 5, 2018 (D.C. Act 22-442; D.C. Official Code § 1-1001.07).

## ATTACHMENT G



**OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL**

Council of the District of Columbia  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 4  
Washington, DC 20004  
(202) 724-8026

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Councilmember Charles Allen

**FROM:** Nicole L. Streeter, General Counsel *NLS*

**DATE:** October 29, 2018

**RE:** Legal sufficiency determination for Bill 22-778, the Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018

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The measure is legally and technically sufficient for Council consideration.

This bill would amend the District of Columbia Election Code of 1955 to:

- Allow 16- and 17-year-olds to vote;
- Allow 16- and 17-year-olds to serve as a qualified petition circulator and polling place worker;
- Require educational institutions<sup>1</sup> to provide, on an annual basis, its students 16 years of age and older with a paper voter registration application or information, in writing, describing how to obtain a voter registration application online; and
- Make conforming amendments.

I am available if you have any questions.

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<sup>1</sup> Under the bill, the term "educational institution" means a school in the District of Columbia Public Schools system, a public charter school, an independent school, a private school, a parochial school, or a private instructor.

## ATTACHMENT H



**Comparative Committee Print  
B22-0778  
Committee on the Judiciary & Public Safety  
November 1, 2018**

Section 2

**D.C. Code § 1-1001.02. Definitions.**

For the purposes of this subchapter:

(1) The term "District" means the District of Columbia.

(2) The term "qualified elector" means a person who:

(A) Is at least ~~17~~ 16 years of age ~~and who will be 18 years of age on or before the next general election;~~

(B) Is a citizen of the United States;

(C) Has maintained a residence in the District for at least 30 days preceding the next election and does not claim voting residence or right to vote in any state or territory;

(D) Is not incarcerated for a crime that is a felony in the District; and

(E) Has not been found by a court of law to be legally incompetent to vote.

[...]

(26) "Qualified petition circulator" means an individual who is ~~18~~ 16 years of age or older and either:

(A) A District resident; or

(B) A resident of another jurisdiction who has registered with the Board as a petition circulator and consented to being subject to the subpoena power of the Board and the jurisdiction of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the enforcement of subpoenas without respect to the individual's place of residence.

(27) The term "digital voter service system" means a website or mobile application that allows an individual to do the following:

(A) Apply to become a registered voter;

(B) Change the individual's name, address, or party affiliation in the individual's existing voter registration record; and

(C) Request an absentee ballot.

(28) The term "DMV" means the Department of Motor Vehicles.

(29) "Mobile application" means specialized software, designed for a mobile device, in which electronic signatures are collected on an electronic petition.

(30) "Mobile device" means a handheld, portable, wireless computing device, including a tablet computer or mobile phone.

(31) "Educational institution" means a school in the District of Columbia Public Schools system, a public charter school, an independent school, a private school, a parochial school, or a private instructor.

**D.C. Code § 1-1001.05. Board of Elections – Duties.**

[...]

(e)(1)(A) The Board shall select, employ, and fix the compensation for an Executive Director and such staff the Board deems necessary, subject to the pay limitations of § 1-611.16.

The Executive Director shall serve at the pleasure of the Board. The Board, at the request of the Director of Campaign Finance, shall provide employees, subject to the compensation provisions of this paragraph, as requested to carry out the powers and duties of the Director. Employees assigned to the Director shall, while so assigned, be under the direction and control of the Director and may not be reassigned without the concurrence of the Director.

(B) The Executive Director shall be a District resident throughout his or her term and failure to maintain District residency shall result in a forfeiture of the position.

(C) Notwithstanding the provisions of Unit A of Chapter 14 of Title 2, each qualified District resident applicant shall receive an additional 10-point preference over a qualified non-District resident applicant for all positions within the Board unless the applicant declines the preference. This 10-point preference shall be in addition to, and not instead of, qualifications established for the position. All persons hired after February 6, 2008, shall submit proof of residency upon employment in a manner determined by the Board. An applicant claiming the hiring preference under this section shall agree in writing to maintain bona fide District residency for a period of 7 consecutive years from the effective date of hire and shall provide proof of bona fide residency annually to the director of personnel of the Board for the first 7 years of employment. Failure to maintain District residency for the consecutive 7-year period shall result in forfeiture of employment. The Board shall submit to the Mayor and Council annual reports detailing the names of all new employees, their pay schedules, titles, and place of residence.

(2) No provision of this subchapter shall be construed as permitting the Board to appoint any personnel who are not full-time paid employees of the Board to preliminarily determine alleged violations of the law affecting elections, conflicts of interest, or lobbying.

(3) The Board may appoint a General Counsel to serve at the pleasure of the Board. The General Counsel shall be entitled to receive compensation at the same rate as the Executive Director of the Board and shall be responsible solely to the Board. The General Counsel shall perform such duties as may be delegated or assigned to him or her by rule or order of the Board.

(4)(A) The Board shall select, appoint, and fix the compensation of temporary election workers to operate the polling places, including precinct captains who shall oversee the operations of polling places in accordance with rules prescribed by the Board, and polling place workers who shall assist the precinct captains. Precinct captains shall be qualified registered electors in the District. Polling place workers shall be qualified registered electors in the District; ~~provided, that the Board may also appoint as polling place workers individuals who are at least 16 years of age on the day that they are working in this capacity, who reside in the District of Columbia, and who are enrolled in or have graduated from a public or private secondary school or an institution of higher education.~~ Any polling place worker shall be required to:

- (i) Complete at least 4 hours of training;
- (ii) Receive certification as a polling place worker under standards that the Board shall promulgate; and
- (iii) Take and sign an oath of office to honestly, faithfully, and promptly perform the duties of office.

(B) The Board shall establish standards to measure the performance of polling place workers, including the past performance of a polling place worker, and shall consider the polling place worker's past performance before appointing him or her to work as a polling place worker in a subsequent election.

[...]

**D.C. Code § 1-1001.07. Voter.**

(a) No person shall be registered to vote in the District of Columbia unless:

(1) He or she meets the qualifications as a qualified elector as defined in § 1-1001.02(2);

(2)(A) He or she executes an application to register to vote by signature or mark (unless prevented by physical disability) on a form approved pursuant to subsection (b) of this section or by the Election Assistance Commission attesting that he or she meets the requirements of a qualified elector, and if he or she desires to vote in party elections, indicating his or her political party affiliation; or

(B) He or she applies for a DMV-issued driver's license or non-driver's identification card pursuant to subsection (c) of this section; and

(3) The Board approves his or her registration application as provided in subsection (e) of this section.

(a-1)(1) No application for voter registration may be accepted or processed by the Board unless the application includes:

(A) The DMV-issued identification number of the applicant, or

(B) The last 4 digits of the social security number of an applicant who has not been issued a current and valid DMV-issued identification.

(2) If an applicant has not been issued a current and valid DMV-issued identification or a social security number, the Board shall assign the applicant the unique identifier assigned pursuant to § 1-1001.05(a)(1).

~~(a-2) A person who is otherwise qualified may pre-register on or after that person's 16th birthday and may vote in any election occurring on or after that person's 17th birthday; provided, that the person is at least 18 years of age on or before the next general election.~~

(b) In administering the provisions of subsection (a)(2) of this section:

(1) The Board shall prepare and use a registration application form that meets the requirements of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 [42 U.S.C. § 1973gg et seq.] and of the Help America Vote Act of 2002, and in which each request for information is readily understandable and can be satisfied by a concise answer or mark.

(2) Mail-in voter registration application forms approved by the Board shall meet the requirements of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993, approved May 20, 1993 (107 Stat. 77; 42 U.S.C. § 1973gg et seq.) and the Help America Vote Act of 2002, shall be designed to provide an easily understood method of registering to vote by mail, and shall be mailable to the Board with postage prepaid. These forms shall have printed on them, in bold face type, the penalties for fraudulently attempting to register to vote pursuant to § 1-1001.14(a) and the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 [42 U.S.C. § 1973gg et seq.]. If an applicant fails to properly complete the registration form, the Board's registrar shall notify the applicant and provide the applicant with an opportunity to complete the form in a timely manner prior to the next election.

(2A) No later than 180 days following February 26, 2015, the Board shall implement a digital voter service system that includes a voter registration application form that may be executed by either:

(A) An electronic signature provided by the applicant directly to the Board;  
or

(B) An electronic signature provided to the Board by the DMV in accordance with paragraph (5) of this subsection.

(3) The Board shall accept any application form that has been preapproved by the Board for the purpose of voter registration and meets the requirements of this subsection or has been approved for use by federal legislation or regulation.

(4) The Board shall provide a field on voter registration forms to allow an applicant to indicate his or her interest in working as a polling place worker during the next election.

(5) For each individual who submits a voter registration application using the Board's digital voter service system required by paragraph (2A) of this subsection, the Board shall request, and the DMV shall furnish, an electronic copy of the applicant's signature for the purpose of executing the application submitted for acceptance and approval; provided, that the applicant provides the applicant's DMV-issued identification number and affirmatively consents to the use of that signature as the signature for the application submitted.

(c)(1)(A)(i) Each DMV application for a DMV-issued driver's license (including any renewal application) or nondriver's identification card shall automatically serve as an application to register to vote in the District of Columbia, unless the applicant indicates on the application that he or she does not want the application to serve as a voter registration application.

(ii) For each applicant who did not decline to register to vote or update his or her voter registration information under sub-subparagraph (i) of this subparagraph and stated that he or she is a citizen of the United States, the DMV shall provide to the Board electronic records containing the applicant's:

- (I) Legal name;
- (II) Date of birth;
- (III) Residence;
- (IV) Mailing address;
- (V) Previous voter registration address;
- (VI) DMV-issued identification number or social security number;
- (VII) Party affiliation;
- (VIII) Response as to whether the applicant would like information on serving as a poll worker in the next election;
- (IX) Citizenship information; and
- (X) Electronic signature.

(B) The DMV and the Board shall jointly develop a DMV application form that shall contain the necessary information for the:

(i) Issuance, renewal, or correction of the applicant's driver's license or nondriver's identification card; and

(ii) Means for the applicant to:

- (I) Provide a mailing address, if mail is not received at the residence address;

- (II) State whether the applicant is a United States citizen;
- (III) Indicate a choice of party affiliation (if any);
- (IV) Indicate the last address of voter registration (if known);
- (V) Indicate whether the applicant would like information on serving as a poll worker in the next election;

(VI) Sign, under penalty of perjury, an attestation that sets forth the requirements for voter registration and states that the applicant meets each of those requirements; and

(VII) Decline to register to vote, or, if already registered in the District, decline to update his or her voter registration.

(C) The application for voter registration submitted pursuant to this subsection shall be considered as an update to any previous voter registration.

(D) Any application submitted for the purpose of a change of address or name accepted by the DMV, pursuant to this subsection, shall be considered notification to the Board of the change of address or name unless the applicant states on the application that the change of address or name is not for voter registration purposes.

(E) Repealed.

(F) Repealed.

(G) The instructions for completing the form shall also include a statement that:

(i) If an applicant declines to register to vote, the fact that the applicant has declined to register will remain confidential and will be used only for voter registration purposes; and

(ii) If an applicant does register to vote, the office at which the applicant submits a voter registration application will remain confidential and will be used only for voter registration purposes.

(H) The deadline for transmission of the voter registration application to the Board shall be not later than 10 days after the date of acceptance by the DMV, except that if a voter registration application is accepted within 5 days before the last day for registration to vote in an election, the application shall be transmitted to the Board not later than 5 days after the date of its acceptance.

(I)(i) An application shall be considered received by the Board pursuant to subsection (e) of this section on the date it was accepted by the DMV.

(ii) The Board shall consider an application that the DMV accepted for the purposes of voter registration on or before the voter registration deadline as timely received.

(J) Any form issued by mail for the purposes of correcting or updating a driver's permit or nondriver's identification card shall be designed so that the individual may decline to correct or update the individual's address or name for voter registration purposes and provide a mailing address, if mail is not received at the residence address.

(K) The Board and the DMV shall match information in their respective databases to enable each agency to verify the accuracy of the information on applications for voter registration.

(2) Repealed.

(3)(A) If a person who is not a qualified elector becomes registered to vote under this subsection, that person's voter registration:

(i) Shall be presumed to have been effected with official authorization and not through the fault of that person;

(ii) Shall not constitute a violation of § 1-1001.14; and

(iii) Shall not serve as a basis for holding that person civilly or criminally liable for the voter registration;

(B) If a person who is not a qualified elector becomes registered to vote under this subsection and votes or attempts to vote in an election held after the effective date of that person's voter registration, that person shall not be in violation of § 1-1001.14 or held civilly

or criminally liable for voting, unless that person votes or attempts to vote knowing that he or she is not a qualified elector.

(d)(1)(A) Any agency of the District of Columbia government that provides public assistance or that operates or funds programs primarily engaged in providing services to persons with disabilities shall be designated as a voter registration agency.

(B) In addition to the agencies named in subparagraph (A) of this paragraph, the Department of Parks and Recreation, the Department of Corrections, the Department of Youth and Rehabilitative Services, and the Office of Aging shall be designated as voter registration agencies.

(C) The Mayor may designate any other executive branch agency of the District of Columbia government as a voter registration agency by filing written notice of the designation with the Board.

(D) The District shall cooperate with the Secretary of Defense to develop and implement procedures for persons to apply to register to vote at Armed Forces recruitment offices.

(2) The agencies named in paragraphs (1)(A), (B), and (C) of this subsection shall:

(A) Distribute with each application for service or assistance, and with each recertification, renewal, or change of address form relating to the service or assistance, a voter registration application, unless the applicant, in writing, declines to register to vote;

(B) Provide assistance to applicants in completing voter registration application forms, unless the applicant refuses assistance;

(C) Provide the services described in this paragraph at the person's home, if a voter registration agency provides services to a person with a disability at the person's home; and

(D) Accept completed forms and forward these forms to the Board as prescribed in this section.

(3) Each voter registration agency shall, on its own application, document, or on a separate form, provide to each applicant for service or assistance, recertification or renewal, or change of address the following information:

(A) The question, "If you are not registered to vote where you live now, would you like to apply to register to vote here today?";

(B) Boxes for the applicant to check to indicate whether the applicant would like to register or decline to register to vote (failure to check either box being deemed to constitute a declination to register for purposes of subparagraph (C) of this paragraph, together with the statement (in close proximity to the boxes and in prominent type), "IF YOU DO NOT CHECK EITHER BOX, YOU WILL BE CONSIDERED TO HAVE DECIDED NOT TO REGISTER TO VOTE AT THIS TIME.";

(C) The statement, "If you would like help completing the voter registration application form, we will help you. The decision whether to seek or accept help is yours. You may complete the application form in private.";

(D) The statement, "If you believe that someone has interfered with your right to register or decline to register to vote, your right to privacy in deciding whether to register or in applying to register to vote, or your right to choose your own political party or other political preference, you may file a complaint with the chief administrative officer of the Board of Elections and Ethics [Board of Elections]."; the name, title, address, and telephone number of the chief administrative officer shall be included on the form; and

(E) If the voter registration agency provides public assistance, the statement, "Applying to register or declining to register to vote will not affect the amount of assistance that you will be provided by this agency."

(4) No person who provides a voter registration service at a District of Columbia government agency shall:

(A) Seek to influence an applicant's political preference or party registration;

(B) Display any political preference or party allegiance;

(C) Make any statement to an applicant or take any action the purpose or effect of which is to discourage the applicant from registering to vote; or

(D) Make any statement to an applicant or take any action the purpose or effect of which is to lead the applicant to believe that a decision to register or not to register has any bearing on the availability of services or benefits.

(5) Each agency that has been designated a voter registration agency in paragraph (1) of this subsection shall provide to each applicant who does not decline to register the same degree of assistance with regard to the completion of the registration application form as provided by the office with regard to the completion of its own forms, unless the applicant refuses assistance.

(6) No information that relates to a declination to register to vote in connection with an application made at an office described in this subsection may be used for any purpose other than voter registration.

(7) No voter registration agency shall reveal whether a particular individual completed an application to register to vote except when ordered by the officer designated in paragraph (12)(A) of this subsection when a complaint has been filed pursuant to paragraph (11) of this subsection or pursuant to § 11 of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993.

(8) A completed voter registration application or change of address or name accepted at a voter registration agency shall be transmitted by the agency to the Board by not later than 10 days after its acceptance by the agency, except that if a voter registration application is accepted at a voter registration agency office within 5 days before the deadline for voter registration in any election, the application shall be transmitted by the agency to the Board not later than 5 days after the date of acceptance.

(9) An application accepted at a voter registration agency shall be considered to have been received by the Board pursuant to subsection (e) of this section as of the date of acceptance by the voter registration agency.

(10) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Board shall ensure that the identity of the voter registration agency through which any particular individual is registered to vote is not disclosed to the public.

(11) An allegation of violation of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 [42 U.S.C. § 1973gg et seq.] or of this subchapter may be made in writing, filed with the chief administrative officer of the Board and detail concisely the alleged violation.

(12)(A) The Board shall designate its chief administrative officer as the official responsible for the coordination of the District of Columbia's responsibilities under the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 [42 U.S.C. § 1973gg et seq.] and as the official responsible for the coordination of this subchapter.

(B) The chief administrative officer designated under subparagraph (A) of this paragraph and the Board shall have the authority:

(i) To request any voter registration agency to submit in writing any reports and to answer any questions as the chief administrative officer or the Board may prescribe that relate to the administration and enforcement of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 [42 U.S.C. § 1973gg et seq.] and of this subchapter; and

(ii) To bring a civil action in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for declaratory or injunctive relief with respect to the failure of any voter registration agency to comply with the requirements of this subchapter.

(13) The Board may adopt regulations with respect to the coordination and administration of the National Voter Registration Act Conforming Amendment Act of 1994 and the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 [42 U.S.C. § 1973gg et seq.].

(14)(A) Agencies, other than voter registration agencies, may be designated as application distribution agencies. These agencies shall include the District of Columbia Public Library, the District of Columbia Fire Department, the Metropolitan Police Department, and any other executive agency the Mayor designates in writing.

(B) Each application distribution agency shall request, and the Board shall provide, sufficient quantities of mail-in voter registration applications for distribution to the public.

(C) These mail-in voter registration applications shall be placed in each office or substation of the agency in an accessible location and in clear view so that citizens may easily obtain a mail-in voter registration application.

(D) Nothing in this subsection shall be deemed to require or permit employees of a mail-in voter registration application distribution agency to accept completed forms for delivery to the Board or to provide assistance in completing an application.

(15) Each educational institution shall, on an annual basis, provide its students 16 years of age and older with a paper voter registration application or information, in writing, describing how to obtain a voter registration application online.

(e)(1) Within 19 calendar days after the receipt of a registration application form from any applicant, the DMV, pursuant to subsection (c)(1) of this section, or a voter registration agency, pursuant to subsection (d) of this section, the Board shall mail a non-forwardable voter registration notification to the applicant advising the applicant of the acceptance or rejection of the registration application by its chief voter registration official.

(2)(A) If the application is accepted, the notification shall include the applicant's name, address, date of birth, party affiliation (if any), ward, precinct and Advisory Neighborhood Commission single-member district ("SMD"), the address of the applicant's polling place and the hours during which the polls will be open. The voter registration notification shall state that the applicant shall not vote before her or his ~~18th~~ 16th birthday. The Board may include along with the registration notification any voter education materials it deems appropriate. Registration of the applicant shall be effective on the date the Board determines that the applicant is a qualified elector and eligible to register to vote in the District of Columbia.

(B) For applications received from the DMV, pursuant to subsection (c)(1) of this section, the notification, in addition to the information required under subparagraph (A) of this paragraph, shall include information regarding the process to decline voter registration and to change or adopt a political party affiliation, if one was not designated on the application.

(3) If the application is rejected, the notification shall include the reason or reasons for the rejection and shall inform the voter of his or her right to appeal the rejection pursuant to subsection (f) of this section.



(4) If the voter registration notification is returned to the Board as undeliverable, the Board shall mail the notice provided in subsection (j)(1)(B) of this section.

(5)(A) Any duly registered voter may file with the Board objections to the registration of any person whom he or she has reason to believe is fictitious, deceased, a disqualified person, or otherwise ineligible to vote (except with respect to a change of residence), or file a request for the addition of any person whose name he or she has reason to believe has been erroneously omitted or cancelled from the voter roll. Application for the correction of the voter roll or the challenge of the right to vote of any person named on the voter roll shall be in writing and include any evidence in support of the challenge that the registrant is not qualified to be a registered voter. The Board shall issue regulations establishing an expedited procedure for its review of a voter registration challenge or an application for correction of the voter roll filed during the period beginning on the 90th day before an election and ending on the 45th day before an election. The Board shall not accept a voter registration challenge or application for correction of the voter roll after the 45th day before an election.

(B) The Board shall send notice to any person whose registration has been challenged along with a copy of any evidence filed in support of the challenge. The notice shall be sent to the address listed on the Board's records. The notice shall state that the registrant must respond to the challenge not later than 30 days from the date of the mailing of the notice or be cancelled from the voter roll.

(C) The Board's chief voter registration official shall make a determination with respect to the challenge within 10 days of receipt of the challenged registrant's response. The determination shall be sent by first class mail to the challenged registrant and the person who filed the challenge. Within 14 days of mailing the notice, any aggrieved party may appeal, in writing, the chief voter registration official's determination to the Board. The Board shall conduct a hearing and issue a decision within 30 days of receipt of the written notice of appeal.

(D) With respect to a request for the addition of a person to the voter roll, if the Board's records do not evidence that the individual named has been erroneously omitted or cancelled, the Board shall send notice to the individual named in the request and to the person who filed the request. The notice shall state that the named individual must file a completed voter registration application in order to become a registered voter in the District.

(6) An individual whose registration has been cancelled under this section shall not be eligible to vote except by re-registration as provided in this section.

(f) In the case where a voter registration application is rejected pursuant to subsection (e) of this section, the Board shall immediately notify the individual of the rejection by first class mail. The individual may request a hearing before the Board on the rejection within 14 days after the notification is mailed. Upon the request for a hearing, the Board shall hold the hearing within 30 days after receipt of the request. At the hearing, the applicant and any interested party, may appear and give testimony on the issue. The Board shall determine the issue within 2 days after the hearing. Any aggrieved party may appeal the decision of the Board to the Superior Court of the District of Columbia within 3 days after the Board's decision. The decision of the Court shall be final and not appealable. If any part of the process is pending on the date of any election held under this subchapter, the person whose registration is in question shall be permitted to cast a ballot in such election which is designated "challenged". The ballot shall be counted in the election if the applicant is ultimately deemed to be a qualified registered elector.

(f-1) Repealed.

(g)(1) Except as provided in paragraph (4) of this subsection, at any time except during the 21-day period preceding any regularly scheduled election, a qualified elector or any individual who will be a qualified elector at the time of the next election may register to vote in the precinct in which the voter maintains residence by completing a voter registration application and submitting it in person at the Board's office, using the digital voter service system required by subsection (b)(2A) of this section, or by mail. A registration that is received no later than 4:45 P.M. on the 21st day preceding any election, or such time on that day as the Board's office remains open to receive registrations, shall be accepted.

(2) The Board shall process voter registration applications and voter registration update notifications that are received, whether received postmarked, non-postmarked, or digitally, by the Board by the 21st day preceding any election.

(3) The Board shall process faxed postcard applications from persons eligible to vote absentee in federal elections in the District of Columbia pursuant to the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act, approved August 28, 1966 (100 Stat. 924; 42 U.S.C. § 1973ff et seq.), which are faxed not later than the 21st day preceding any election.

(4) After the 21st day preceding an election, a qualified elector may register to vote in the precinct in which the voter maintains residence by completing a voter registration application and submitting it in person at the Board's office. A qualified elector shall not change his or her party affiliation after the 21st day preceding an election.

(5) A qualified elector may register on election day by appearing in person at the polling place for the precinct in which the individual maintains residence by completing a voter registration application, making an oath in the form prescribed by the Board, and providing proof of residence. An individual may prove residence for purposes of registering by presenting such identification as required under federal law, District law, or Board regulation, including a current and valid government photo identification or a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, pay check, or other document specified by the Board, that shows the current name and address of the voter. Each individual who successfully registers on Election Day shall cast a regular ballot. A qualified elector shall not change his or her party affiliation on election day.

(6) The precinct captain shall keep a record of individuals who attempt to register on election day and shall indicate the form of proof of residency provided by the person. The record shall be forwarded to the Board with the election returns for that precinct.

(7)(A) The Board shall maintain a list, including the name and addresses, of all individuals who either:

(i) Attempted to register and vote in the election, but could not provide proof of residence; or

(ii) Successfully registered and voted.

(B) The Board shall make the list available to public inspection upon request.

(h)(1) No later than 45 days preceding any election held under this subchapter, the Board shall cause a District-wide alphabetical list of qualified electors registered to vote in the District to be placed in the main public library and shall cause an alphabetical ward list of qualified registered electors for each ward to be placed in each branch library located within the respective ward. Such lists shall be current as of the 60th day preceding such elections.

(2) The Board shall cause a copy of the list of qualified electors registered to vote as of the date the voter registry closed to be placed in public buildings of the District of Columbia for a period of not less than 14 days preceding each election held under this subchapter as follows:

(A) A District-wide list shall be placed in the main public library; and

(B) A ward list for the ward shall be placed in every branch library located within the respective ward.

(2A) The Board shall publish and display on its website for a period of not less than 14 days preceding each election held under this subchapter a searchable copy of the list of qualified electors registered to vote as of the date the voter registry closed.

(3) The provisions of this subsection shall not apply when a special election is held to fill a vacancy in an Advisory Neighborhood Commission single-member district.

(i)(1) A person shall be entitled to vote in an election in the District of Columbia if he or she is a duly registered voter. A qualified elector shall be considered duly registered in the District if he or she has met the requirements for voter registration and, on the day of the election, either resides at the address listed on the Board's records or files an election day change of address pursuant to this subsection.

(2) Each registered voter who changes his or her place of residence from that listed on the Board's records shall notify the Board, in writing, of the new residence address. A change of address shall be effective on the date the notification was mailed as shown by the United States Postal Service postmark. If not postmarked, the notification shall be effective on the date of receipt by the Board. Change of address notifications from registrants shall be accepted pursuant to subsection (g) of this section, except that any registrant who has not notified the Board of his or her current residence address by the deadline established by subsection (g) of this section may be permitted to vote at the polling place that serves the current residence address by filing an election day change of address notice pursuant to paragraph (4) of this subsection.

(3) Each registered voter who votes at a polling place on election day shall affirm his or her residence address as it appears on the official registration roll for the precinct. The act of signing a copy of the official registration roll for the precinct shall be deemed affirmation of the voter's address as it appears on the Board's registration records.

(4)(A) A registered voter who has moved within the District but has not notified the Board in writing of his or her current address by the deadline established pursuant to subsection (g) of this section, or who is designated inactive pursuant to subsection (j) of this section, shall, prior to being permitted to vote, file notification of a change of address on a form provided by the Board, at the polling place serving the current residence address; provided, that the voter shall provide proof of address change in the form of a current and valid government photo identification or a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, pay check, or other document specified by the Board that shows the current name and address of the voter either in person on election day or at the Board's office or a voter registration agency following the election.

(B) Repealed.

(C) A registered voter who files an election day change of address may vote by regular ballot on election day at the polling place serving the current residence address or the accessible polling place assigned by the Board pursuant to § 1-1001.09(b)(3).

(5)(A) As soon as practicable after the election, the Board shall mail each registered voter who filed a change of address at the polls on election day a nonforwardable address confirmation notice to the address provided in the written affirmation.

(B) Where the United States Postal Service returns the address confirmation notification as undeliverable or indicating that the registrant does not live at the address provided in the written affirmation, the Board shall notify the Corporation Counsel [Attorney General] of the District of Columbia.

(6) Each individual who has not previously voted in a federal election in the District and who registers to vote by mail shall present, either at the time of registration, at the polling place, or when voting by mail, a copy of a current and valid government photo identification or a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, or pay check that shows the name and address of the voter. Individuals who fail to present this identification shall vote by special ballot. This paragraph shall not apply to:

(A) Individuals whose registration application includes a DMV-issued identification number or at least the last 4 digits of the individual's social security number, and matches an existing identification record bearing the same number, name, and date of birth as the application; or

(B) Individuals entitled to vote otherwise than in person under federal law.

(j)(1) The Board shall develop a systematic program to maintain the voter roll and keep it current. This program shall include the following:

(A) In January of each odd-numbered year, the Board shall confirm the address of each registered voter who did not confirm his or her address through the voting process or file a change of address at the polls in the preceding general election by mailing a first class nonforwardable postcard to the address listed on the Board's records.

(B)(i) If the United States Postal Service returns the notice and provides a new address for the registrant within the District of Columbia, the Board shall change the address on its records and mail to both the old and new addresses of the registrant a forwardable notification that the address has been changed to reflect the information obtained from the United States Postal Service.

(ii) If the United States Postal Service returns the notice and provides a new address outside the District of Columbia, the Board shall mail a forwardable notice to both the old and new address informing the registrant how to register to vote in the new jurisdiction or correct the address information obtained from the United States Postal Service.

(iii) If the United States Postal Service returns the notice to the Board as undeliverable, the Board shall mail to the registrant at his or her last known address the notice prescribed in sub-subparagraph (ii) of this subparagraph.

(C) The notices prescribed in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of this paragraph shall include a pre-addressed and postage paid return notification postcard to enable the registrant to correct any address information obtained from the United States Postal Service. In addition, the notices shall include the following information:

"If you did not change your residence, or changed residence but remained in the District, you should return the card not later than the deadline for mail registration for the next federal election (the 30th day before the election). If the card is not returned, affirmation of your address may be required before you are permitted to vote in any election during the period beginning on the date of the notice and ending on the day after the date of the second general election for federal office that occurs after the date of the notice, and if you do not vote in an election during that period, your name will be removed from the list of eligible voters."

(D) The Board may, in addition, utilize information obtained from the United States Postal Service, the National Change of Address System ("NCOA"), the DMV

(subject to the provisions of subsection (c)(1)(D) of this section, which identifies registrants who have moved from the addresses listed on the Board's records. In these cases the Board shall issue the notices prescribed in subparagraph (B) of this paragraph.

(2)(A) Upon mailing of the notice required in paragraph (1)(B) of this subsection, the registrant's voter registration status shall be designated as inactive on the voter roll.

(B) Where a registered voter is designated as inactive on the voter roll pursuant to subparagraph (A) of this paragraph and the registrant provides the Board with a current residence address, or votes in any election in accordance with subsection (i) of this section by the date established in subparagraph (C) of this paragraph, the inactive designation shall be removed from the registrant's record.

(C) Where the Board mails the notice required in paragraph (1)(B) of this subsection, and the registrant fails to respond to the notice and fails to vote during the period beginning on the date the notice was mailed and ending on the day after the second general election for federal office, the registrant's name shall be removed from the voter roll.

(3) As part of its systematic voter roll maintenance program, the Board may, by regulation, develop additional procedures to identify and remove from the voter roll registrants who are deceased and no notification was received from the Bureau of Vital Statistics, who have moved from the District and no notification was received from the registrant or the United States Postal Service, or who otherwise no longer meets the qualifications as duly registered voters.

(4) Any systematic program conducted by the Board to identify individuals who do not reside at the address listed on the Board's records shall be completed not less than the 90th day immediately preceding any primary, general, or District-wide special election.

(5) The voter registrations of individuals whose registrations are designated as inactive on the voter roll, pursuant to paragraph (2) of this subsection:

(A) Shall not be utilized in the calculation of the number of signatures required for qualification of candidate, initiative, referendum, and recall petitions;

(B) Shall not be counted as valid in the verification of signatures pursuant to §§ 1-1001.08(o), 1-1001.16(o), and 1-1001.17(k);

(C) Shall not be included where the Board is required:

(i) To provide lists of registered voters at the polls on election day or for public inspection;

(ii) To calculate or report the number of registered voters for an administrative purpose; or

(iii) For the issuance of information mailings; and

(D) Their names shall not be sold by the Board either in hard copy form or electronic media, except upon specific request of the purchaser and the fact that the registrations are designated as inactive is made known to the purchaser.

(k)(1) The Board shall cancel a voter registration upon receipt of a signed request from the registrant, upon notification of the death of a registrant, upon notification of a registrant's incarceration for conviction of a felony, upon notification that the registrant has registered to vote in another jurisdiction, or for any other reason specifically authorized in this subchapter.

(2) The Board shall request at least monthly, and the Mayor shall furnish, the name, address, and date of birth, if known, of each District resident ~~18~~ 16 years of age and over reported deceased within the District, together with the name and address of each District resident who has been reported deceased by other jurisdictions since the date of the previous report.

(3) The Board shall request at least monthly, and the Superior Court of the District of Columbia shall furnish, the name and address of each person incarcerated as a result of a felony conviction since the date of the previous report, and the former and present names and address of each person whose name has been changed by decree or order of the Court since the date of the previous report.

(4) The Board shall request from the United States District Court for the District of Columbia, at least monthly, the name and address of each person incarcerated as a result of a felony conviction since the date of the previous report.

(5) Any individual whose registration has been cancelled shall not be permitted to vote except by re-registration as provided in this section.

(l) Before May 1, 2010, the Board shall submit to the Council a report indicating the feasibility of implementing automatic voter registration in the District.

(m)(1) By October 1, 2017, the Board, in conjunction with the DMV, shall develop and implement electronic transmission of voter registration information from the DMV;

(2) Upon implementation of electronic transmission of voter registration information required under paragraph (1) of this subsection, the DMV shall transmit any eligible voter registration application to the Board no later than 5 days after the date of the application's acceptance by the DMV.

## ATTACHMENT I

1 **Committee Print**  
2 **B22-0778**  
3 **Committee on the Judiciary & Public Safety**  
4 **November 1, 2018**

5  
6 A BILL  
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10

11 IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
12  
13  
14  
15

16 To amend the District of Columbia Election Code of 1955 to allow 16- and 17-year-olds to vote,  
17 to allow 16- and 17-year-olds to serve as qualified petition circulators and polling place  
18 workers, and to require each educational institution to provide, on an annual basis, its  
19 students 16 years of age and older with a voter registration application or information, in  
20 writing, describing how to obtain a voter registration application online.

21 BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this  
22 act may be cited as the “Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018”.

23 Sec. 2. The District of Columbia Election Code of 1955, approved August 12, 1955 (69  
24 Stat. 699; D.C. Official Code § 1-1001.01 *et seq.*), is amended as follows:

25 (a) Section 2 (D.C. Official Code § 1-1001.02) is amended as follows:

26 (1) Paragraph (2)(A) is amended to read as follows:

27 “(A) Is at least 16 years of age;”.

28 (2) Paragraph (26) is amended by striking the phrase “18 years of age” and inserting  
29 the phrase “16 years of age” in its place.

30 (3) A new paragraph (31) is added to read as follows:

31 “(31) “Educational institution” means a school in the District of Columbia Public  
32 Schools system, a public charter school, an independent school, a private school, a parochial  
33 school, or a private instructor.”.



(b) Section 5(e)(4)(A) (D.C. Official Code § 1-1001.05(e)(4)(A)) is amended by striking the phrase “in the District; provided, that the Board may also appoint as polling place workers individuals who are at least 16 years of age on the day that they are working in this capacity, who reside in the District of Columbia, and who are enrolled in or have graduated from a public or private secondary school or an institution of higher education.” and inserting the phrase “in the District.” in its place.

(c) Section 7 (D.C. Official Code § 1-1001.07) is amended as follows:

(1) Subsection (a-2) is repealed.

(2) Subsection (d) is amended by adding a new paragraph (15) to read as follows:

“(15) Each educational institution shall, on an annual basis, provide its students 16 years of age and older with a paper voter registration application or information, in writing, describing how to obtain a voter registration application online.”.

(3) Subsection (e)(2)(A) is amended by striking the phrase “18th birthday” and inserting the phrase “16th birthday” in its place.

(4) Subsection (k)(2) is amended by striking the phrase “18 years of age” and inserting the phrase “16 years of age” in its place.

Sec. 3. Fiscal impact statement.

The Council adopts the fiscal impact statement in the committee report as the fiscal impact statement required by section 4a of the General Legislative Procedures Act of 1975, approved October 16, 2006 (120 Stat. 2038; D.C. Official Code § 1-301.47a).

Sec. 4. Effective date.

This act shall take effect following approval by the Mayor (or in the event of veto by the Mayor, action by the Council to override the veto), a 30-day period of congressional review as

57 provided in section 602(c)(1) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, approved December 24,  
58 1973 (87 Stat. 813; D.C. Official Code § 1-206.02(c)(1)), and publication in the District of  
59 Columbia Register.